

1937.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE SEVENTEENTH  
ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, HELD AT GENEVA IN THE YEAR 1936.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

## SEVENTEENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

SIR,—  
New Zealand Government Offices,  
415 Strand, London, W.C. 2, 19th November, 1936.

I have the honour to inform you that, in company with Sir James Parr as a delegate, with Mr. C. A. Berendsen and Mr. R. M. Campbell as substitute delegates, and Sir Cecil Day and Mr. C. A. Knowles in the capacity of advisers, I attended the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations which opened at Geneva on the 21st September, 1936. In this my first direct association with the activities of the League I was fortunate in being able to draw upon the extensive knowledge of procedure gained by my colleague Sir James Parr, whose long experience of the varied operations of the League proved of great value. In this connection it is fitting also that I should mention that Mr. C. A. Knowles, in addition to his role as Adviser, was also appointed Secretary to the delegation. His detailed knowledge of the system under which the League performs its functions is probably unrivalled among delegations, for he has attended every Assembly but one since the League's formation seventeen years ago.

It would be difficult to assess accurately or concisely the general feeling of the delegates who had gathered to take part in the Assembly's discussions. There was, however, even to the most casual observer, little room for doubt that the shadow cast by the recent great failure of the League in the Italian-Abyssinian dispute had produced a marked waning of confidence and an atmosphere amounting almost to gloomy foreboding. The President's reference in his opening speech to a year "crucial beyond all others in the destinies of mankind" accurately reflected the thought present in many minds. The League had been tried and had been found wanting. Was it any wonder, therefore, that among the delegates were many who doubted whether the Covenant, reformed or unreformed, could be made to work effectively? The world was yearning for peace, yet the nations were arming with an almost feverish haste, dominated by a fear which seemed to paralyse the will to bring about peace.

On this, as on other occasions, much attention was naturally focussed upon the attitude of the Great Powers towards the question of the reform of the League. Of the fifty-four States members (excluding Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay, all of which had recently given notice of withdrawal from the League to take effect two years from the date of such notice) only eighteen had forwarded to the Secretary-General prior to the opening of the Assembly on the 21st September, 1936, proposals for such reform in response to the recommendation adopted by the Assembly on the 4th July last. These were—

Argentina.	Hungary.	Peru.
Colombia.	Iraq.	Poland.
Denmark.	Latvia.	Sweden.
Estonia.	Lithuania.	Switzerland.
Finland.	New Zealand.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
France.	Norway.	Uruguay.

The Governments of the above-mentioned States in general expressed appreciation of the value of the League and a desire to ensure its maintenance; but, as regards its future *role*, the obligations under the Covenant, and the methods to be adopted in order to secure more effective results, considerable divergence of opinion was in evidence, as will be seen from Document C. 376, M. 247, 1936, VII.

For example, according to public statements made respectively by her Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs during the previous three months, France rejected in advance any proposal which would impair the structure or the spirit of the Covenant, and while she would be prepared, and would indeed advocate, the strengthening of it by improving its application, any plan which would make of the League a merely academic consulting body could not be accepted by her. She placed great importance on the principle of collective security.

The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, Lithuania, Colombia, and Latvia expressly or implicitly adopted the same view, while New Zealand, as you know, was prepared to reaffirm with the utmost solemnity her continued acceptance of the Covenant as it stands. Indeed, most of the eighteen Governments referred to were either opposed to or not strongly in favour of the idea of drastic amendment of the Covenant. On the other hand, the Argentine Republic considered it desirable not to enter into undertakings beyond those which all members were in a position to observe, taking the view that consideration should be given as to what provisions of the Covenant had been shown by experience to be no longer in keeping with the realities of international life, holding that these provisions should be given an optional character instead of one of strict obligations. The Swiss Government, remarking that the disparity between hopes and realities had proved to be very wide, and was indeed largely responsible for the decline of the League's prestige, took a similar view. Other Governments such as Hungary, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Spain, Sweden, and Iraq, in their respective proposals, laid particular stress upon the League's function of preventing war, arguing that in the first place an agreement must be reached to make more definite preparations for the application of the rules in the Covenant, which are designed to obviate any violation of its principles by strengthening the preventive activities of the League.

The foregoing are typical examples of the divergence of view ascertained prior to the first meeting of the Assembly.

#### ASSEMBLY.

After an eloquent exhortation by the President of the Council, acting as President of the Assembly until that body should choose its President for the session, the Assembly proceeded to its business.

#### CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.

Its first action was to appoint the Credentials Committee. On this occasion a secret ballot was taken on a proposal of the Abyssinian delegate, and the following is the result of the voting :—

Mr. A. Eden (United Kingdom) .. .. .	47
M. Litvinoff (U.S.S.R.) .. .. .	47
M. Delbos (France) .. .. .	46
M. Osusky (Czechoslovakia) .. .. .	43
M. Politis (Greece) .. .. .	43
M. Rüstü Aras (Turkey) .. .. .	41
M. Tudela (Peru) .. .. .	41
Mr. W. J. Jordan (New Zealand) .. .. .	40
M. Limburg (Netherlands) .. .. .	39

It would, I think, be correct to interpret the inclusion of her representative as a compliment to New Zealand, for although the work of the Credentials Committee is generally more or less formal, on this occasion its task was rendered more delicate and difficult because of a question which had been raised, not by the Assembly nor by any delegate, but rather in the form of a discussion in the press as to the legal standing of the delegation which had been appointed by the Emperor of Abyssinia, whose country had been virtually annexed by Italy.

The Committee had before it a memorandum from the Secretary-General of the League reporting on the results of his recent visit to Rome where he had called upon Signor Mussolini and the Italian Foreign Minister. The question of the collaboration of Italy with the League had naturally been raised. The Italian Government, M. Avenol understood, was anxious to resume loyal, unrestricted, and unreserved collaboration with the League, but it saw one obstacle—namely, the presence of an Ethiopian delegation at the Assembly. On his explaining that there could be no question of bringing up again in any form the matter of the status or of the existing legal situation, the Secretary-General stated that he understood that the Italian Government had no intention of raising the point, but that it intended to make its collaboration depend exclusively on the presence *de facto* of an Ethiopian delegation.

In view of the fact that the Ethiopian delegation had taken its place in the Assembly Hall, the Italian Government, in line with its intentions as described above, took no part in the deliberations of the Assembly, and the seats allocated to its representatives remained vacant throughout the session.

The questions which confronted the Credentials Committee were twofold :—

- (1) Whether His Majesty Haile Selassie I was in law or in fact still exercising dominion over Abyssinia and was thus justified in issuing credentials to the Ethiopian delegation.
- (2) Whether in any case Abyssinia as a State Member of the League could on any ground of justice or principle be excluded from representation in the Assembly. The present conditions had been brought about not by any delinquency on the part of Abyssinia, but by the act of a State pronounced by the League itself as the aggressor.

Faced with these considerations, among others, the Credentials Committee met twice during the first day (21st September) under the Chairmanship of M. Tudela (Peru), who at the second meeting of the Assembly presented the Committee's interim report on the credentials of the delegates as a whole. This showed that six States—namely, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Salvador—had not appointed delegates. With one exception there is no need to refer to the other countries with which the report deals. The exception was the delegation appointed by His Majesty Haile Selassie I, in regard to which the report observed that the Credentials Committee was of the opinion that the question called for closer examination.

On the 23rd September the final report (Document A. 41, 1936) of the Committee was presented to the Assembly. After calling attention to certain facts—the absence from his country of the Emperor, and of the Government from the capital, and the nature and extent of the power of the authority established in that part of the country not occupied by Italy (which the Ethiopian delegation had contended was more than half of the whole territory)—the report stated that the question the Committee was called upon to examine was whether the head of the State from which the credentials under examination emanated was in fact exercising his legal title effectively enough to make these credentials perfectly in order. No member of the Committee had suggested that the question should be settled in the negative. Some doubt, however, had prevailed as to whether the credentials were in order. At one time it was proposed that an advisory opinion should be sought of the Permanent Court of International Justice. That procedure, however, meant delay and involved the question as to what would be the position of the Abyssinian delegation in the meantime. The Rules of Procedure entitle a delegation, to whose admission objection had been raised, to sit provisionally unless otherwise decided by the Assembly, and, presupposing objection, in practice the question would be settled before the advisory opinion was formulated. Accordingly it was proposed by the Credentials Committee that the Abyssinian delegation should receive the benefit of the doubt and be allowed to sit during the present session.

The delegate of Hungary asked that a vote by roll-call should be taken by the Assembly, his proposal being seconded by the Austrian and Albanian delegates. As a result of this voting thirty-nine countries were found to be in favour of the adoption of the report, four (Albania, Austria, Ecuador, and Hungary) voted against it, and six States abstained from voting—namely, Bulgaria, Panama, Portugal, Siam, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

The Rules of Procedure required an absolute majority. As 43 votes had to be taken into account and thirty-nine States had voted in favour, the report was declared adopted. The first delegate of Ethiopia, while making reservations concerning the grounds on which it was based, gratefully accepted its conclusions.

It will be noted that the question is not finally disposed of, the solution being a temporary one and holding good “only for the present session.”

As a Member of the Committee, and thus able to speak with first-hand knowledge of its discussions, I think it appropriate to say that I was deeply impressed both by the thoroughness with which the problem was examined and thrashed out and by the obvious anxiety of all the delegates to find a solution based solely upon principle and in accord with a just interpretation of the spirit of the Rules of Procedure.

#### ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT.

As its President the Assembly elected M. Saavedra Lamas, the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic, who received 44 votes out of 45 valid votes cast. The name of M. Lamas is well and honourably known even beyond the confines of the South American Continent, as are also his unwavering efforts in the cause of peace. His opening speech, which will be found amongst the documents which accompany this report, included the following striking passages:—

“We must proceed with our quest for peace and mutual understanding. We must not be disheartened, either by the diversity of our problems or by their unvarying complexity. During the seventeen years of its existence the League has known alternately success and deep disappointment. Such is the lot of every living organism in its necessary efforts to adapt itself to circumstances. This is a biological process which should cause us no surprise . . . Law can only be the expression of a moral reality. We may amend the Covenant according to forms of law, but its efficacy will depend above all on the weight of the moral forces to which it owed its origin at a moment when civilization, in a great spiritual awakening, reacted against the barbarism of war. The League of Nations has been the subject of many criticisms and many reproaches, and it has been made to bear alone the weight of many responsibilities. It is justified in turning upon its critics and claiming before the world the moral contribution, the gift of good faith, solidarity, and even of sacrifice, which was promised to it at its birth, and with which it cannot dispense unless it is to fail in its mission.”

#### ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

On the 22nd September the Agenda (Document A. 2 (1), 1936) was adopted and the Assembly Committees appointed. It is to these Committees, normally six in number, that most of the items of the Agenda are referred. Actually five Committees were set up (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6), but the Assembly reserved the right to appoint its Third Committee should it become necessary to deal with the questions relating to disarmament. It would be well to anticipate events and to state that

subsequently the Third Committee was set up on the proposal of the delegations of Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Subsequently a motion, also emanating from these delegations, was accepted by the Assembly under which there was referred to the Third Committee for examination :—

- (1) That part of the report on the work of the League of Nations during the year 1935–1936 which deals with the question of the reduction and limitation of armaments ; (2) The statements made on the same subject during the general discussion, and particularly those concerning the resumption of the work of international disarmament. (Documents A. 47 and A. 50.)

The Assembly also appointed an Agenda Committee to examine and make proposals on any new questions brought before the Assembly. The items on the Agenda were apportioned as follows :—

*Committee No. 1.—Constitutional and Legal Questions—*

Item 4 (a) : Permanent Court of International Justice.

(a) Participation of States not members of the League in the election of members of the Court.

Item 5 : Rules of Procedure of the Assembly—

(a) Maintenance of the rule relating to the convocation of the Finance (Fourth) Committee of the Assembly.

(b) Proposed amendments regarding the composition of the General Committee, the insertion of a provision regarding the Agenda Committee and the creation of a Nominations Committee.

Item 10 : Composition of the Council.

Item 13 : International Repression of Terrorism.

Item 27 : Convention on Nationality concluded on 26th December, 1933, at the Seventh International Conference of American States.

*Committee No. 2.—Work of the Technical Organizations of the League—*

Item 7 : Committees of the League of Nations.

Item 12 : Nutrition.

Item 20 : Economic and Financial Work.

Item 21 : Communications and Transit.

Item 22 : Health Work.

*Committee No. 4.—Organization of the Secretariat and Finances of the League—*

Item 6 (c) : Supervisory Commission. (Appointment of two members of the Commission.)

Item 6 (d) : Administrative Board of the Staff Pensions Fund. (Appointment of three members and three substitute members of the Administrative Board.)

Item 14 : Audited Accounts for the Seventeenth Financial Period (1935) and Auditor's Report thereon.

Item 15 : Budget of the League of Nations for the Nineteenth Financial Period (1937).

Item 16 : Report of the Supervisory Commission.

Item 17 : Contributions in Arrears.

Item 18 : Allocation of Expenses.

Item 19 : Report of the Administrative Board of the Staff Pensions Fund.

*Committee No. 5.—Humanitarian and Social Questions—*

Item 23 : Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs.

Item 24 : Social Work.

*Committee No. 6.—Political Questions—*

Item 11 : Refugees—

(a) Report of the Nansen International Office for Refugees.

(b) Results of the work of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees—

(i) Report of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees.

(ii) Report of the Acting President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees.

(iii) Report of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees, Jewish and Other, coming from Germany.

Item 25 : Intellectual Co-operation.

To Committee No. 6 was also referred on the request of the Norwegian delegation, the reports of the Mandatory Powers, the reports of the Permanent Mandates Commission, and all other documents relating to the question of mandates which were distributed to the Members of the League since the last session of the Assembly.

Committee No. 3, Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, is referred to above.

The above items will be specifically dealt with at a later stage of this report. They need no more than passing reference here.

The following items, however, were referred to yet another Committee—the General Committee of the Assembly—to whose constitution I shall devote a sentence later, for consideration as to the procedure to be followed in regard to them—

Item 4 (b) : Permanent Court of International Justice. Election to vacancies among the judges of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

Item 6 (a) : Commission of inquiry for European union.

Item 6 (b) : Appointment of the President of the governing body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees.

Item 8 : Question of prohibiting, under the provisions of the Covenant, the supply of arms and war material to belligerents.

Item 9 : Amendment of the Covenant of the League of Nations in order to bring it into harmony with the Pact of Paris : Examination of the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Conciliation concluded at Rio de Janeiro on 10th October, 1933.

Item 26 : Application of the principles of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

#### ELECTION OF THREE NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

The President announced in this connection that as the Assembly agenda also contained an Item 10, Report of the Special Committee on the Composition of the Council, he proposed to consult the General Committee on the steps to be taken for the election at the present session of three non-permanent Members of the Council. Such consultation would in no way affect any arrangements made by the Secretary-General to communicate to delegations a list of candidates and such applications for re-eligibility as might be received.

On the afternoon of the 22nd September the Committees met to elect their Chairman. The following were elected :—

First Committee	..	..	..	..	M. Limburg (Netherlands).
Second Committee	..	..	..	..	M. van Langenhove (Belgium).
Fourth Committee	..	..	..	..	Dr. Guani (Uruguay).
Fifth Committee	..	..	..	..	M. Schmidt (Estonia).
Sixth Committee	..	..	..	..	M. Motta (Switzerland).

The Agenda Committee met later and elected as its Chairman M. Beck (Poland). Subsequently the Third Committee elected as its Chairman Dr. Lange (Norway), one of the League's veterans. Dr. Lange took part in the Assembly of 1920.

On the 24th September the Assembly, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, elected its six Vice-Presidents, and its choice fell on the first delegates of France, the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Canada, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Italy.

As already stated, however, Italy had not appointed a delegation and consequently she took no part in the work of the Assembly.

The General Committee of the Assembly was then constituted. It consisted of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of Committees (including the Chairman of the Agenda Committee, Mr. Beck, Poland, and the Credentials Committee, M. Tudela of Peru. Its primary role is to assist the President in the general direction of the work of the Assembly.

#### ELECTION OF THREE NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

On Monday, the 28th September, the Assembly proceeded to the election of three Member States to fill non-permanent Council seats due to be vacated by Argentina, Australia, and Denmark. The result of the ballot, which was secret, showed that Bolivia was elected by 49 votes and New Zealand and Sweden by 48 votes each. New Zealand therefore succeeded to a seat which has been occupied in turn by Canada, the Irish Free State, and Australia. I should mention that our delegation had not only received many assurances of warm support, but some delegations expressed after the election particular satisfaction that New Zealand had been elected to fill one of the vacant seats. In entering upon his task the New Zealand representative on the Council will be called upon to visit Geneva at least four times annually in order to take part in the regular sessions of the Council. Indeed, if the experience of recent years is to be repeated, his attendance there will be still more frequent. The Council meetings vary in length of time according to the urgency and nature of the matters to be discussed, but each meeting involves an absence from headquarters of seldom less than eight days under normal conditions. In addition, account must be taken of the annual session of the Assembly in September, lasting usually about seventeen to twenty-one days.

In the section of this report, which is devoted to the First Committee, I have dealt with the question of the composition of the Council. The report of the First Committee on this question was in due course laid before the Assembly, which approved of the Committee's conclusions, including the creation of two additional non-permanent seats (Documents A. 48 and A. 52). The Assembly therefore proceeded on the 8th October to elect Member States to fill the new seats, with the result that China and Latvia were elected. In consequence the Council of the League now consists of four permanent and eleven non-permanent Members, namely :—

Bolivia	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	..	..	..	..	..	(Permanent).
Chile	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
China	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Ecuador	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
France	..	..	..	..	..	(Permanent).
Italy	..	..	..	..	..	(Permanent).
Latvia	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Roumania	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Spain	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Sweden	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Turkey	..	..	..	..	..	(Non-permanent).
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	..	..	..	..	..	(Permanent).

Concurrently with the transaction of formal proceedings to which I have already referred, and in the interval of the work of the various committees, the delegates delivered orally to the Assembly the views which their respective Governments had empowered them to express. Brief allusion has already been made to the opinions and proposals of France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and a number of other Member States, all of which were subsequently supported and amplified by their representatives in speeches before the Assembly. Without embarking upon a *résumé* of all the speeches, it may suffice to remark that in general they revealed, on the one hand, undiminished attachment to the ideals of the Covenant, and, on the other, varying opinions as to the methods by which the League could discharge either in full or in a modified form the functions which had been assigned to it by its creators.

As regards the attitude of the British Commonwealth of Nations, speaking to the Assembly on the 25th September the representative of the United Kingdom (Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), painted in his opening remarks a word picture of the present state of the world and the seriousness of the times. Nationalism was strong, its antagonisms vibrant, challenging enthusiasms for rival forms of government were hurled in defiance at one another. Even the most peace-loving nations were expending an ever-increasing proportion of their national wealth upon armaments to the ultimate detriment of their economy. It was a British tradition to distrust extremes, but respect for our own forms of government could not be increased by pouring scorn on those of other nations. After centuries of experience democracy still appeared to Great Britain not effete, but enduring; the epitome of man's endeavour to create a civilization wherein he could find freedom, individuality, and peace. Other nations felt just as strongly about their own systems of government and Great Britain had no quarrel with them on that account. The first rule of ordered life between nations was faith in one's own national tenets, toleration for those of others.

The policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would continue, Mr. Eden said, to be based on the League of Nations, and her whole-hearted co-operation could be counted upon. Lack of universality in the League had been a great drawback, and so also had been its failure to play a more effective part in the earlier stages of a crisis, a defect which it seemed highly desirable to remove. Great Britain attached importance to the question of eliminating the unanimity rule as affecting the first paragraph of Article XI of the Covenant, so far as that rule required the consent of the States in controversy. The United Kingdom, he went on to say, was in favour of regional pacts devised to strengthen general security, provided they were consistent with the Covenant.

After paying a tribute to the importance of the work of the Economic Committee, to which Great Britain attached the greatest value, Mr. Eden turned to the subject of armaments. Great Britain, he said, was engaged in the re-equipment of its three services—navy, army, and air—and was making good progress with its programme. While he believed that the people of the United Kingdom would much prefer to spend their wealth in other ways, His Majesty's Government had no option but to persist in their present course unless and until the nations of the world reached an international agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments.

Mr. S. M. Bruce, on behalf of Australia, declared that his Government was in favour of the separation of the Covenant from the Peace Treaties. He supported generally the views expressed by the representative of Great Britain, and so did the Aga Khan speaking on behalf of India. The delegates of South Africa and the Irish Free State did not address the Assembly. Mr. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, after referring to the contrast between the conditions existing on the American Continent and those in Europe and the consequent divergence of outlook and conception of interest and duty as between the nations of the two continents, went on to say that Canada reaffirmed her adherence to the principles of the Covenant, that the preservation of peace by the progressive organization of international co-operation within a collective system had been championed in equal measure by all political parties in Canada, and that its attachment to this ideal was as strong to-day as it was at the inception of the League. At the same time, he added, Canada believed that automatic commitment to the application of force was not a practical policy. He pointed to the danger that regional agreements might develop in practice into old-fashioned military alliances and to the fact that under present circumstances they could only be worked out in Europe. The Canadian House of Commons, by unanimous resolution, had made the adoption of undertakings to apply either military or economic sanctions subject to the approval of Parliament. What he had said did not mean that in no circumstances would the Canadian people be prepared to share in action against an aggressor—there had been no absolute commitments either for or against participation in war or other forms of force; but it did mean that any decision on the part of Canada to participate in war would have to be taken by the Parliament or people of Canada in the light of all existing circumstances, "circumstances of the day as they exist in Canada, as well as in the areas involved." He welcomed the proposal that the Covenant should be detached from the Versailles Treaty. Canada believed that the only way to strengthen the League's shaken authority was to take heed of previous experience, to make the policies of the League conform to realities, to the conditions and attitudes of mind that existed in fact in the world of to-day, without losing sight of the possibility of modifying those policies as facts and national attitudes changed in the future. Universal acceptance of the principles of the Covenant must be the constant aim of those who hope for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. Universality, however, was not to be attained in a single stride, and in the opinion of Canada its achievement would only be possible as the utility of the preventive functions of the League was confirmed by experience and supported by the quickened conscience of humanity. The coercive and primitive provisions of the Covenant had operated in the past as a deterrent to the kind of collaboration which must serve as an intermediate stage to a League of Nations which would be universal. By emphasizing the mediation and conciliation aspects of the Covenant, we could help to transform the collective system from a hope to a reality. Every vacant seat in the Assembly was a broken link in the chain of collective security. Canada did not believe that formal amendment of the Covenant now was either possible or necessary.

The attitude of New Zealand is already well known through the publication in the Dominion of the Government's proposals which you empowered me to transmit to the Secretary-General of the League and which were duly distributed to States Members prior to the opening of the Assembly. On the 29th September I supported these proposals in a speech, the text of which is reported in the verbatim record of the 29th September, 1936.

#### APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COVENANT.

The Assembly, at the beginning of its session, had referred to its General Committee for examination certain items on the Agenda. Amongst these was the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant, with which is associated—

- (a) The problem of harmonizing the Covenant with the Treaty for the Renunciation of War (Pact of Paris), and the Treaty of Non-aggression and Conciliation signed at Rio de Janeiro in 1933; and
- (b) The question of prohibiting, under the provisions of the Covenant, the supply of arms and war materials to belligerents.

It was not until the 8th October—three days before the close of the Assembly—that this question came up for general discussion. On that date the President of the Assembly submitted a draft resolution from the General Committee to set up a General Commission to put forward suggestions for its study. Its terms were as follows:—

“The Assembly—

“Acting upon the recommendation adopted by the Assembly on 4th July, 1936;

“Having regard to the replies of the Governments of States Members to the invitation extended to them in pursuance of that recommendation;

“Having regard to the statements that have been made concerning the application of the principles of the Covenant during the general discussion;

“Considering that among the problems which arise out of the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant, and which must therefore be covered by the inquiry into that subject, mention should be made of the problem, already considered by the League, of harmonizing or co-ordinating the Covenant with other treaties of a universal tendency aiming at the pacific settlement of international disputes—that is to say, the Treaty for the Renunciation of War, signed at Paris on 27th August, 1928, and the Treaty of Non-aggression and Conciliation, signed at Rio de Janeiro on 10th October, 1933, on the initiative of the Argentine Republic, which treaties fall within the scope of Article 21 of the Covenant and, like the Covenant, are designed to ensure the maintenance of peace;

“Considering that another problem already envisaged by the League of Nations is also connected with the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant—namely, the prohibition, in virtue of the provisions of the Covenant, of the supply of arms and war material to belligerents—a problem the study of which was entrusted by the Council to a Special Committee, which suspended its work owing to the fact that the Assembly was also dealing with the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant;

“Decides to set up a General Commission of the kind provided for in Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure for the question of the application of the principles of the Covenant and all problems connected therewith, the Commission to report to the Assembly and submit its recommendations to the latter on the manner in which the study of these problems should be pursued.”

After some discussion the Assembly adopted this draft resolution, and the General Commission was accordingly set up.

At its first meeting, open to the delegates of all States Members of the League, Mr. S. M. Bruce was unanimously elected Chairman. Then followed a lengthy and animated exchange of views on the question of setting up a special body to make a preliminary study of these problems, two main suggestions being debated:—

- (1) The establishment of a large Committee on which all the views expressed by Member States would be represented; and
- (2) The establishment of a smaller or limited Committee.

It was finally decided, although not unanimously, to recommend to the Assembly, on the general basis of a proposal made by Switzerland, the formation of a limited Committee, which it was subsequently agreed should be composed of the fifteen members of the Council of the League and thirteen representatives of Member States not having seats on the Council. The Committee thus elected consisted of the following States:—

Argentine.  
Austria.  
Belgium.  
Bolivia.  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland.  
Bulgaria.  
Canada.  
Chile.  
China.  
Colombia.  
Czechoslovakia.  
France.  
Greece.  
Iran.

Italy.  
Latvia.  
Mexico.  
Netherlands.  
New Zealand.  
Poland.  
Portugal.  
Roumania.  
Spain.  
Sweden.  
Switzerland.  
Turkey.  
Uruguay.  
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

It was agreed that this Committee should be empowered to invite to take part in its discussions, during the consideration of any given proposal, any other member of the League whose opinions it might seem desirable to ascertain.

As to the terms of reference of this limited Committee of twenty-eight members, the General Commission in its draft report recalled that these were defined in the two texts already adopted by the Assembly—namely, the recommendation of the 4th July, 1936, inviting Governments to submit proposals, and the Resolutions of the 8th October, then under discussion. Furthermore, it followed from the latter resolution that the limited Committee would take the place of the Committee of all the Members of the League appointed by the Assembly's resolution of the 25th September, 1931, and also of the Special Committee appointed by the Council to study the question of the prohibition, in virtue of the provisions of the Covenant, of the supply of arms and war material to belligerents. The Commission agreed that it would be highly desirable that the Governments of States Members of the League which had not yet made known their views on the problems to be dealt with, either by written proposals (in accordance with the Assembly's recommendation of the 4th July, 1936) or in the speeches of their delegates in the Assembly, should forward to the Secretary-General any proposals they might desire to submit. These would be examined and classified by the Secretary-General.

With a view to seeking universality as, in their opinion, the best guarantee for the efficacy and success of the League of Nations, the Chilean Government had submitted a proposal that, either directly through diplomatic channels or by the convening of a diplomatic conference, the views of States who are not members of the League should be ascertained. To this suggestion the General Commission could not agree, on the ground that it was for the Members of the League themselves, in the first place, to study the problems connected with the question of the application of the Covenant. One such problem was that of universality to which various Governments had referred. The point raised by the Chilean delegation and other delegations which shared its view might, it seemed to the General Commission, be met by the fact that the limited Committee would certainly have to consider this question and possibly to examine the appropriate methods for ascertaining the views of non-Member States. The proposal of the Chilean delegation and any other proposal to the same effect would thus be considered by that Committee.

Finally, the draft report of the General Commission concluded with a resolution, for despatch to the Assembly which, after referring to the decision to set up the limited Committee, stated that—

“The Committee will as soon as possible draw up a report, which will be forwarded to the Governments of the Members of the League.”

It seemed to me that the adoption of this final paragraph as it stood might, and probably would, result in the postponement of further discussion of the important questions involved until the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly twelve months hence. I therefore thought it my duty to the New Zealand Government to express concern at this possibility and to ask that consideration be given to the inclusion in the Resolution of a clause empowering the Committee to recommend that the Assembly should be convened as soon as possible after the Committee's report is made available in order to ensure something definite being done without the delay of another year. Several of the delegates associated themselves with this attitude, including the delegate of Norway, who submitted a proposal in support of it. Eventually, the view was accepted and as a consequence the following addition was made to the paragraph above quoted—

“The Committee shall be authorized to propose a special session of the Assembly, should it be considered advisable to do so.”

This met the main point I had raised.

The subject was further dealt with on the 10th October, when the Assembly adopted the General Commission's Resolution (quoted in Document A. 83), which reads as follows:—

“The Assembly—

“Recalling its recommendation of 4th July, 1936, and its resolution adopted on 8th October, 1936:

“Adopts the foregoing report; and

“Decides to set up the committee proposed in this report to study all the proposals which have been, or may be, made by Governments regarding the application of the principles of the Covenant and the problems connected therewith.

“On the basis of this study, the Committee will prepare a report, as soon as possible, indicating the definite provisions, the adoption of which it recommends with a view to giving practical effect to the above-mentioned recommendation of 4th July, 1936.

“This report shall be submitted to the Governments of the States Members of the League of Nations to serve as a basis for the decisions to be taken in this matter.

“The Committee shall be authorized to propose a special session of the Assembly, should it consider it advisable to do so.”

On the same day at a preliminary meeting of the Committee itself it was decided on the suggestion of the United Kingdom delegate, that the 7th December should be the date on which this Committee of twenty-eight members should meet at Geneva in order to commence its study of the problems, in the light of proposals already made by Governments, or of views expressed in the Assembly by their delegates, and of any others which may be received prior to that date.



The preceding pages contain a general account of the more important proceedings of the Assembly during the seventeen plenary meetings held between the opening on the 21st September and the closing on the 10th October of its Seventeenth Ordinary Session. In its concluding stages the Assembly followed the machinery procedure for which its rules provide and with which you have been made familiar through the annual reports of my predecessors. At its last two meetings the reports and resolutions of the Committees, upon which more detailed comment is made under their respective headings in this report, were adopted and approved by the Assembly. Its proceedings were then closed after a speech of commanding eloquence delivered by its popular President (M. Saavedra Lamas).

#### FIRST COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: SIR JAMES PARR. Substitute: MR. C. A. BERENDSEN.

##### PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

Two questions, both of some little difficulty and one of considerable importance, arose in connection with filling three vacancies on the Permanent Court of International Justice, for two of which nominations had, in accordance with the Statute of the Court, been called at one time and for one of which nominations had been called at a later date.

The first and most important question was as to the facilities to take part in the election which should be provided for those States which, though no longer Members of the League, were still parties to the Statute of the Permanent Court. Three States were concerned, Germany, Brazil and Japan, and the method by which these States should be invited to take part in the election of Judges to fill the three vacancies had been the subject of consideration by a Committee of Jurists and by the Council of the League. By the Statute of the Court the election of Judges has to be made by the Assembly and the Council, voting separately, and the main point at issue was whether these three States should be entitled to join in the election not only in the Assembly, but also in the Council.

Both the Committee of Jurists and the Council, while unable to make any permanent recommendation, considered that the States in such a position should be invited to take part in these elections both in the Assembly and in the Council, but in the discussions that developed on this matter in the First Committee it was pointed out with some force that the effect of this would be to place States which had resigned from the League in a more favourable position than many States which remained Members of the League but had not seats on the Council.

It was felt in certain quarters that to give the States which had resigned from the League the right to vote both in the Council and in the Assembly, while the majority of the States remaining in the League would be restricted to voting in the Assembly only, was inequitable; but after a lengthy debate the opinion prevailed that as a temporary solution it would be wiser to allow these States to vote in both bodies, and this conclusion was subsequently adopted by the Assembly.

The second point, which had also been considered by the Council, was a technical one as to the method by which the election should take place, in view of the fact that there had been two separate requests for nominations for the three vacant seats. The Committee of Jurists and the Council recommended that there should be two separate elections, one for two seats and the second for the remaining seat, and though some objection was raised to this proposal in the First Committee, largely for practical reasons in view of the time that might be involved on account of the method of election prescribed by the Statute, this view was finally adopted, particularly in view of the requirements of the Statute that in the election regard should be had to the fact that the whole body of Judges should represent the main forms of civilization and the principal legal systems of the world, and that the actual vacancy to be filled must have a bearing on this point.

The report of the Committee is contained in Document A. 42, 1936, V.

At its meeting on the 8th October the Assembly in conjunction with the Council proceeded to elect by ballot Judges to fill the three vacant seats referred to in the opening paragraph of this section of my report. Dr. Manley O. Hudson (United States of America) with 48 votes, M. Hammarskjöld (Sweden) with 38 votes, and Dr. Cheng Tien Hsi (China) with 30 votes were, as the result of this ballot, declared duly elected (Document A. 51, 1936, V).

##### RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

Two points were at issue in this connection:—

- (1) The maintenance of the rule relating to the Convocation of the Finance (Fourth) Committee of the Assembly. This was an experimental rule, adopted at the last Assembly, enabling the Finance Committee, composed of representatives nominated by each Member of the League, to meet a week earlier than the Assembly should this be considered desirable. The rule had not been applied in practice, but the First Committee considered it desirable to retain this power and consequently recommended that the rule be extended for a further year.
- (2) Proposed amendments regarding the Composition of the General Committee; the insertion of a provision concerning the Agenda Committee, and the Creation of a Nominations Committee.

After a somewhat lengthy discussion amendments were proposed to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly as follow :—

- (1) The Credentials Committee was given definite power to elect its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman. An Agenda Committee was provided for to consist of seven members, and a Special Committee of eleven members was also provided for to nominate candidates for functions which carry with them a seat on the General Committee.
- (2) But the most important amendment was to the rule providing for the General Committee itself, which is largely the “steering” Committee of the Conference. The Chairman of the Agenda Committee and the Chairman of the Credentials Committee were added to this Committee, and the number of Vice-Presidents was increased from six to eight. The General Committee will therefore in future be composed of the President of the Assembly, eight Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen of the six main Committees, the Chairman of the Agenda Committee, and the Chairman of the Credentials Committee.

The Report of this Committee is contained in Document A. 75, 1936, V, and its resolutions are as follow :—

I. “The Assembly decides that the rule relating to the convening of the Finance (Fourth) Committee, established as an experiment by the Assembly’s resolution of 11th October, 1933, shall be maintained for the session of 1937, namely—

“‘The President of the Council, after consulting the Chairman of the Supervisory Commission, may convene the Finance Committee for a date preceding by not more than one week the first meeting of the ordinary session of the Assembly. The Committee shall be composed of the representatives accredited for the purpose by the Members of the League. It shall appoint its Chairman, who shall thereby become a member of the General Committee of the Assembly under the terms of Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure. The establishment of the Committee shall be reported to the Assembly at the first plenary meeting of the Assembly.’”

II. “The Assembly decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows—

“(1) Paragraph 3 of Rule 5 is amended to read as follows—

“‘3. A Committee of nine members for the examination of the full powers shall be elected by the Assembly on the proposal of the President. The Committee shall appoint its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman. It shall report without delay.’”

“(2) Paragraph 1 of Rule 7 is amended to read as follows—

“‘1. The General Committee of the Assembly shall consist of the President of the Assembly, eight Vice-Presidents, and the Chairmen of the main Committees of the Assembly, the Agenda Committee, and the Committee for the examination of the full powers.

“‘The Assembly may decide to add to the General Committee the Chairmen of other Assembly Committees and, in exceptional cases, other members.’”

“Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 remain unchanged.

“(3) A new rule, numbered 7 (a), is inserted, reading as follows—

“‘1. An Agenda Committee shall be set up at the beginning of each session. It shall consist of seven members, who shall be appointed by the Assembly on the nomination of the President.

“‘2. The Committee shall elect its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

“‘3. The Committee shall consider applications for the inclusion of new questions in the agenda of the Assembly, and shall report to the Assembly thereon.

“‘4. Proposals for the mere reference to one of the main Committees of portions of the Report on the Work of the League shall be decided upon by the Assembly without previous reference to the Agenda Committee.’”

III. “The Assembly adopts as an experiment the following procedure which, unless otherwise decided in the interval, shall have effect down to the termination of the ordinary session of 1939—

“‘Rule 7 (b).

“‘1. At the commencement of each session the Assembly shall appoint a Committee of eleven members, whose duty shall be to nominate candidates for functions which carry with them a seat on the General Committee.

“‘2. The provisional President of the Assembly shall submit proposals to it regarding the composition of this Committee.

“‘3. The Members of the Assembly and the Committees shall retain the right to vote for persons other than those proposed by the above-mentioned Committee.’”

#### COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL.

This subject had been under consideration by a Special Committee set up by the Council in 1935, and the deliberations of this Committee and of the First Committee were of some length and of some little difficulty. The existing constitution of the Council allowed for nine temporary seats in addition to those States holding permanent seats, and in the course of years a position had developed

under which these nine seats had always been distributed as follow: Two to the so-called semi-permanent Members of the Council—Spain and Poland; three to Latin-American States; one to a Little Entente State; one to the group of ex-neutrals; one to a British Dominion; and one to an Asiatic State. This left a considerable number of Members of the League known as the “non-grouped” States who were not, in practice, able to secure election to the Council. In 1933 a temporary and partial remedy was found by the creation, for three years only, of a tenth non-permanent seat to which one of the “non-grouped” States—Portugal—was elected. This tenth seat would have expired with the Assembly of 1936, and even this provision was not considered sufficient to enable a number of the “non-grouped” States to obtain adequate representation on the Council within a reasonable period of time.

The Special Committee set up to consider this subject recommended, therefore, that the non-permanent seats should be increased from nine to eleven. While the majority of this Special Committee favoured the creation of the two extra seats for three years—the normal period of membership on the Council—a minority felt that these seats should be created for one year only.

The discussion of this matter in the First Committee was lengthy and detailed. Objection was raised in several quarters to any increase in the size of the Council, which was considered to be even at present a more numerous body than was completely consistent with the prompt and accurate discharge of its duties. But the majority of the members of the First Committee realized not only that the convention allotting seats to certain groups of States was now so firmly established that it could be altered only with the greatest difficulty, but also that the existing position had created an actual injustice to the “non-grouped” States.

The First Committee’s conclusion, therefore, was that two additional non-permanent seats should be created for a period of three years, but at the same time it recommended the appointment by the Council of a small committee of experts to consider a final solution of the problem.

The report of the First Committee is contained in Document A. 48, 1936, and its concluding resolution reads as follows:—

“The Assembly—

“Having considered the report of the Committee appointed to study the composition of the Council:

“Approves the recommendation of the Committee for the provisional creation of two new non-permanent seats on the Council and, accordingly, declares that it is desirable that, for the period commencing with the election of the non-permanent Members of the Council at the Assembly’s session of 1936, and ending with the election of the said non-permanent Members in the year 1939, the number of non-permanent seats on the Council should be provisionally increased to eleven;

“And considering that, in the opinion of the Committee appointed to study the composition of the Council, with which the Assembly agrees, ‘it would be undesirable that a definitive solution of the problems connected with the composition of the Council should be postponed longer than is necessary’:

“Recommends that, so soon as circumstances permit, the Council will appoint and convene a small committee of experts to draw up proposals on the subject.

“The Assembly instructs the Secretary-General to bring this resolution to the attention of the Council.”

#### INTERNATIONAL REPRESSION OF TERRORISM.

As a result of the murder at Marseilles in 1934 of King Alexander, of Yugoslavia, considerable attention has been directed to possible methods of improving the means of preventing the preparation and execution of terrorist crimes, and especially those which have an international character and thus in some degree might escape the operation of national laws.

In 1934 the Council of the League set up a Committee of Experts to consider this matter, and it was the report of this Committee which was referred for the consideration of the First Committee. The Committee of Experts had prepared two draft conventions which they suggested should be the subject of consideration at an international diplomatic conference in 1937, the first, for the prevention and punishment of terrorism, laying down for the acceptance of all signatory States certain crimes which should be made punishable by their national laws, and the second providing for an International Criminal Court by which such international crimes might be tried instead of by national Courts or in cases where extradition was not granted.

This subject gave rise to a lengthy and animated discussion in the First Committee. Those nations which had been directly or indirectly affected by the Marseilles crime, with others who had reason to fear the activities of terrorists, were most anxious that action should be taken in connection with one or both of these draft conventions at the earliest possible moment. Other delegations felt that the draft prepared by the Committee of Experts was still imperfect, that it covered perhaps too wide a scope, and that in particular it jeopardized, by its insistence on extradition for the wide list of crimes specified in the draft, the right of political asylum to which many States attached the greatest importance. This aspect of the matter was particularly stressed by the representative of Belgium, who not only emphasized the importance which Belgium attached to the right of political asylum in suitable cases, but pointedly referred to the increasing difficulties of this matter in view of the forcible methods of repression adopted by certain existing national Governments.

The Belgian views were shared by a number of other delegations, and it was made plain that the United Kingdom had no intention of jeopardizing its right to provide an asylum for political refugees in appropriate cases. There was a general consensus of opinion that the draft should be referred back

to the Committee of Experts for further revision, but a motion that further consideration should then be deferred until next Assembly was defeated, and the Committee's resolution on this subject, contained in Document A. 72, 1936, V, fixes the date of the calling of the international conference for the year 1937, but leaves it an open question whether the Conference should take place before or after the next meeting of the Assembly.

The resolution of the Committee is as follows :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Having taken cognizance of the second report of the Committee for the International Repression of Terrorism and of the two draft Conventions annexed thereto ;

“ Recognizing the utility for the consolidation of peace of the conclusion of a convention for the prevention and punishment of terrorism ;

“ Considering, however, that the replies of the Governments regarding the draft drawn up by the Committee and the discussions in the First Committee have shown that certain Governments feel doubts which it is desirable to remove :

“ Expresses the view that the contemplated convention, founding itself upon the principle that it is the duty of every State to abstain from any intervention in the political life of a foreign State, should have as its principal objects,—

“ (1) To prohibit any form of preparation or execution of terrorist attacks upon the life or liberty of persons taking part in the work of foreign public authorities and services ;

“ (2) To ensure the effective prevention of such attacks and, in particular, to establish collaboration to facilitate early discovery of preparations for such attacks ;

“ (3) To ensure punishment of attacks of a terrorist character in the strict sense of the word which have an international character either in virtue of the place in which preparations for them were made or the place in which they were carried out, or in virtue of the nationality of those participating in them or their victims ;

“ Notes that certain Governments have disputed the advisability of creating an international criminal Court, but that the trial of persons guilty of such attacks by such a Court is felt by other Governments to constitute an alternative which, in certain cases, would be preferable to extradition or to prosecution, and that on this ground the second convention has been regarded by the latter Governments as valuable, even if it is not capable of securing general acceptance ;

“ Recommends that the Committee revise its conclusions regarding its two drafts in the light of the observations to be found in the Governments' replies or formulated in the course of the debates, in order that the Council may convene a diplomatic conference in 1937.”

#### CONVENTION ON NATIONALITY CONCLUDED ON 26TH DECEMBER, 1933, AT THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN STATES.

The Government of Chile called the Assembly's attention to the above-mentioned Convention on Nationality, the purpose of which is to regularize the situation of nationals of one country who become naturalized in another country. The principal provisions of the Convention are as follows :—

- (1) Naturalization carries with it the loss of the nationality of origin ;
- (2) Naturalization confers nationality solely on the naturalized individual and the loss of nationality affects only the person who has suffered the loss ;
- (3) Neither matrimony nor its dissolution affects the nationality of the husband or wife or of their children.

This is, of course, a very intricate question, and the comparative lack of progress which has followed upon the Convention on this subject signed at The Hague in 1930 is an indication of its difficulty. The First Committee contented itself with a resolution stressing the importance of the question of naturalization and calling the attention of the Members of the League to the fact that the Convention in question is open to accession by all States.

The Resolution of the Committee, contained in Report A. 74, 1936, V, is as follows :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Having examined the item of its agenda which relates to the Convention on Nationality signed on 26th December, 1933, at the Conference of American States at Montevideo ;

“ Being conscious of the importance of the question of naturalization in the relations of States with one another ;

“ Calls the attention of the Members of the League of Nations to the fact that the Convention of Montevideo is open to accession by all States.”

## SECOND COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND OTHER TECHNICAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: Sir JAMES PARR. Substitute: Mr. R. M. CAMPBELL.

For reasons distinct from its agenda, the proceedings of the Second Committee in 1936 acquired a special interest. In the midst of its sittings, on 26th September, the European gold bloc crumbled; the joint declaration by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and France showed that the devaluation which had long been feared and resisted was now welcomed in the hope that it would "establish more solid foundations for the stability of international economic relations"; and the welcome was very generally endorsed at Geneva. No doubt this was an event of high value; it certainly was a useful reminder that countries in which parliamentary democracy survives can still act decisively and in unison.

Yet one feels that its beneficent economic consequences can perhaps be exaggerated. At least, if only to temper our uncritical enthusiasm, we may recall the singularly different reception that was given to a comparable event five years ago. In September, 1931, also during the League Assembly and while the Second Committee was sitting, Great Britain went off gold: the entire Committee, according to the record, then felt deep sympathy for the country which had been obliged to suspend the gold standard.\*

So do times and views change. If experience has shown that the earlier fears were exaggerated, is it not possible that in retrospect observers will be obliged to confess that they erred in the measure credited to currency adjustments in 1936 as the solution of the world's economic problems?

To give these matters their due place in the Second Committee's proceedings, however, I shall refer in the approximate order of their consideration to the several subjects dealt with by the Committee.

## HEALTH.

A review of the League's work in the sphere of health was occasioned by the fact that its Health Committee's three-year term expires on the 31st December, 1936. What may be described as its routine activities cover epidemic-intelligence, malaria-research, biological standardization, and the Singapore Bureau, the functions of which extend to the problems of ill health in the East. Of a more *ad hoc* character have been regional conferences—in 1935 the Pan-African Health Conference met in Johannesburg and the International Pacific Health Conference in Sydney; housing and rural hygiene problems have been under preliminary inquiry, and further collaboration and preparations for a Conference are under way; collective study tours were conducted, with the co-operation of the Governments immediately concerned, to the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, tours the value of which in demonstrating recent achievements in public health and social welfare has been attested.

## NUTRITION.

Nutrition is a special subject which came in the first place within the purview of the Health Committee, whose activities in this field took definite form as early as 1926. More recently, and particularly since the debates at the International Labour Conference and the League Assembly in 1935, international concern in the subject has been stimulated, and a number of useful reports, at once the outcome of and the cause of further interest, have resulted.

Reports in four volumes before the 1936 Assembly and its Second Committee were respectively:—

- (i) The interim report of the Mixed Committee;
- (ii) A technical report on the Physiological Bases of Nutrition;
- (iii) A descriptive summary of post-war developments in the field of nutrition in various countries; and
- (iv) Statistics of food production, distribution and prices.

The last mentioned of these, as was commented not infrequently when the report was published, revealed relatively satisfactory standards of nutrition in New Zealand compared particularly with less-fortunately placed European countries. It showed, to cite two examples, that in the five-year period 1930-34 the average annual consumption of butter varied from 2.3 lb. in Italy to 37.7 lb. in New Zealand, and of meat from 35 lb. in Italy—again the lowest of the seventeen countries recorded—to a maximum of 236 lb. in New Zealand.

These figures, while striking in their way, were not taken—certainly not by the representative of New Zealand—as warrant for our being content or complacent. On the contrary, Sir James Parr observed that there is a problem in ensuring better nutrition in the interests of health, even in the most favoured of countries. He stressed the need for guarding against any erroneous inference that the current awareness of nutrition problems by the Government and people of the United Kingdom indicate that conditions here are exceptionally bad. Noting further that low wages and purchasing-power are the root cause of inadequate nutrition, Sir James Parr was able to point to New Zealand's recent improvements in pay to the employed and the unemployed, as well as to the more direct attack on the nutrition problem, by way of milk-supply to children as forecast in the Finance Minister's 1936 Budget.

All speakers at Geneva appreciated the value of the action that is being taken by the various organs of the League in the sphere of nutrition. Many were able to report that National Nutrition Councils have been set up in their countries, and one resolution suggested by the Second Committee and adopted by the Assembly looked forward to the exchanging of views among representatives of these Councils in regard to their common problems. Generally, one might describe the discussion as being wholly

\* Cf. Official Journal, Special Supplement No. 95, Records of 12th Assembly, Second Committee (21st September, 1931), page 49.

cordial to all efforts towards improved nutrition, linked as it is with the notion of benefiting agriculture; yet this cordiality of sentiment is not to conceal the truth that the practical achievements possible to the League of Nations in this field are of obviously limited scope. The League can usefully assemble facts and statistics, as it has in the reports already mentioned. It can collect, analyse, and distribute information. It can perform the function of a clearing-house, "But"—here I again quote Sir James Parr's words at the Second Committee—"for the most part Governments must themselves take responsibility for required action in their respective countries. It will be the reverse of helpful if, merely in the fact that the League of Nations is active in Geneva, Governments find excuse for delaying practical action themselves."

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT.

The review of League activities between the 1935 and 1936 Assemblies covers subjects under this heading which, with one exception, have but little direct interest to New Zealand—such matters as frontier railway traffic, control of road traffic crossing national frontiers, disputes concerning the International Commission of the Danube, and concerning the railways of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and other essentially European problems.

The exception, with some relevance for New Zealand, is the proposed Convention on the Pollution of the Sea by Oil. The New Zealand and twenty-eight other Governments had submitted their observations on the draft prior to the 1936 Assembly. These pave the way for a conference leading to a convention and Final Act to deal with the nuisance.

#### LEAGUE COMMITTEES.

The constitution, procedure, and practice of the Committees of the League of Nations is another matter of largely formal character that comes within the scope of the Second Committee. The purpose is the necessary one of keeping a watchful eye on the machinery that is evolving to deal with various parts of the League's work. The 1936 proceedings call for no special comment here.

#### ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS.

More difficult to define and limit in scope than any of the foregoing subheadings are the "economic and financial" problems that engaged the Second Committee's attention. Their scope is indeed wide enough to cover not less than the economic state of the world, with its complex of issues that overflow into non-economic spheres and so link up with the central issue of the preservation of peace. So viewed, having regard to the economic causes of present discontents and to the economic form in which other causes sometimes find vent, the work covered by this Committee can properly be regarded, potentially at any rate, as embracing the main constructive purpose of the League of Nations.

In commencing, the Second Committee had before it three reports—one on the present phase of international economic relations; a second on the most-favoured-nation clause; the third a note by the League's Secretary-General on the economic situation. The first noted the regrettable limits to trade and industrial recovery already achieved or in sight and, on one aspect of recent "recovery," it sounded the warning that "a revival in economic activity brought about by the large-scale production of new implements of war cannot be anything but illusory and precarious." It commented on the exceptional difficulties pressing upon countries which still adhered to gold currencies, experience showing that in modern social and economic life the requisite process of deflation cannot be carried through. The connection was noted between exchange rates at inappropriate levels and artificial restrictive expedients against trade. And, looking back to the old normal in free movement of goods, the report favoured all appropriate steps (but not a specially convened world conference) to restore international currency stability and to liberate international trade from restrictions.

The report on the most-favoured-nation clause in commercial treaties likewise looked to the removal of trade barriers as the way out of present difficulties, including the complexities which quotas and exchange controls have brought to the administration of the usual most-favoured-nation clause.

The Secretary-General's note extended to more general economic matters. In regard to production, it summarized the statistical evidence of the world-wide recovery in progress since 1932, at the same time noting the unevenness of the progress; on latest 1936 figures, for example, the indices of industrial production (base 100 in 1929) varied from 351.9 in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (182.9 in 1932) to 67.9 in the Netherlands (62.3 in 1932). Contrasted with these production figures is the failure of trade to keep pace with the general improvement in business. There has been but a slight increase in the volume and value of external trade; though some satisfaction is derived from observing that trade is no longer sinking, it is evident that in this sphere uneasiness persists. Again, currency adjustments are endorsed as a means of rendering easier the solution of international economic problems.

The foregoing will suffice to show that the steps taken in September and October, 1936, towards the devaluation and possible stabilization of a number of currencies were welcome at Geneva. The development, of course, tended to dominate the proceedings of the Second Committee. It was then that one felt the doubts, to which I have previously referred, as to whether any adequate solution to the world's pressing economic problems can be found by means merely or mainly of currency and exchange-rate adjustments. That these adjustments may incidentally be necessary, nobody would deny. But that they are enough in themselves is a contention, I think, impossible to accept and one that is closely akin to the notion that any country's internal economic problems can be solved by recourse simply to novel monetary expedients.

The pre-occupation of the Second Committee with the desirability of reducing currency fluctuations and trade-barriers meant that little attention was given to other and more positive means of solving economic problems. Some time was, however, devoted, at the instance of the United Kingdom delegation, to the problem of access to raw materials. The following resolution was suggested by the Committee and adopted by the Assembly :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Considering that the time has now arrived when discussion of and inquiry into the question of equal commercial access for all nations to certain raw materials might usefully be undertaken with the collaboration of the principal States, whether Members or non-Members of the League, having a special interest in the matter ;

“ Decides to request the Council, when it thinks fit, to appoint a Committee composed, in suitable proportions of members of the Economic and Financial Committees of the League of Nations, together with other qualified persons, irrespective of nationality, to undertake the study of this question and report thereupon ;

“ Recognizes that the choice of the raw materials to be considered should be at the discretion of the body thus appointed ;

“ Believes that the participation in the work of the Committee of nationals of the non-Member as well as Member States specially interested would be desirable ;

“ Suggests that the Council should give attention to this consideration in reaching its decision ;

“ And instructs the Secretary-General to communicate the present resolution to the Governments of non-Member States.”

The Polish delegation initiated discussion on migration, with reference particularly to the emigration of agricultural settlers and to the difficulties experienced by emigration countries in exporting capital for their settlement ; and this subject was placed on the agenda for the League's ordinary session in 1937.

In this part of my report I have not disguised a certain sense of disappointment with the limited achievement, or even efforts, to be recorded of the 1936 Assembly. The challenging fact, which Governments can ignore only at the cost of rightly forfeiting the confidence of the people they serve, is that faulty, man-made organization is frustrating the abundant progress and material security that are within the grasp of our generation. The continued destruction of foodstuffs is noted even in the reports on nutrition, above mentioned. Needless privation, under-nourishment, and ill-health are the other side of the picture. And do not these, with their call to constructive, collective action, justify some impatience at the mainly negative aspirations displayed at Geneva in 1936 ? Even if Governments succeed in removing their recently constructed trade-barriers and in restoring the former stability in currencies, they will have poor warrant for hoping that the grave economic difficulties that resulted from the former conditions will not recur. To contend otherwise is surely to hold that like conditions will not produce like results. Hence the emphasis I have put on the urgent need of more positive economic action, both within and between countries, than seemed to be envisaged in the League of Nations proceedings in 1936.

### COMMITTEE No. 3 : REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS.

Delegate : Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute : Mr. C. A. BERENDSEN.

The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, which was convened by the Council of the League of Nations, first met in February, 1932, and since that date the Third Committee of the Assembly, to which had in the past been allotted the task of considering this subject, had not been constituted. After a period of great activity the progress of the Disarmament Conference gradually slackened, especially from 1935 onwards, and the last work carried out by any of its organs dates back to the spring of 1935. From that time the Conference has suspended its work, though various organs of the Conference—the General Commission, the Bureau, the Committees, and Sub-Committees—are available to resume their duties as soon as the situation warrants it.

The armaments race which followed this unproductive work of the Disarmament Conference and which weighed heavily on the economic life of many countries, Members of the League and non-Members alike, has again made the reduction and limitation of armaments a problem of great urgency, and there was a general feeling that efforts must be stimulated to put an end to this race towards grave and unknown dangers. The matter was first raised by the French delegation, which both in July and in September made known to the Assembly the desire of the French Government to see the resumption of the work of disarmament, and at an early stage of the Assembly the delegations of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden suggested the reconstitution of the Third Committee, a course which was unanimously approved by the Assembly.

The Third Committee was supplied with a voluminous and most informative *résumé* of the work of the Disarmament Conference prepared by the late Mr. Arthur Henderson, who was, of course, the President of that Conference, and the Committee with some emotion signified their appreciation of the value of Mr. Arthur Henderson's work and their sense of loss at his demise.

No attempt was made in the Committee to cover the whole field of disarmament, for which it was generally conceded the time was not appropriate, but it did express the opinion that work might well be resumed upon those aspects of the subject which the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference had, when it ceased its labours, considered to be capable of early agreement, namely :—

- (a) The regulation of and the manufacture of and trade in armaments ;
- (b) Budgetary publicity ; and
- (c) The establishment of the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

The Commission reaffirmed the opinion of the Bureau that these three questions had reached a stage at which a solution may be possible at a relatively early date. In addition, the desirability was stressed of pursuing its work in other fields as well. The French delegation, for example, suggested the consideration of a Convention on Limitation and Assistance in regard to air armaments, while reference was again made to the Convention on Financial Assistance of 1930, and the General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War of 1931. The Committee realized that the resumption of the work of the Disarmament Conference, which it recommended, must depend to a considerable extent upon the existing political situation and upon the decision of the Disarmament Conference and its organs. While passing the resolution set out below, the Committee in its report (Document A. 64, 1936, IX) made it plain that in its opinion the resumption of the work on Disarmament could in no sense replace the efforts of the League of Nations to ensure collective security and to avoid the necessity for making use of existing armaments. The Committee's resolution is as follows :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Firmly convinced of the need of pursuing and intensifying the efforts made to bring about the reduction and limitation of armaments provided for in Article 8 of the Covenant :

“ Welcomes the action initiated by the French Government with a view to the early convocation at the most opportune date of the Bureau of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, and

“ Requests the Council to communicate to the Governments of the countries represented on the Conference the present report and the Minutes of the Third Committee's discussions.”

#### FOURTH COMMITTEE: ORGANIZATION OF THE SECRETARIAT AND FINANCES OF THE LEAGUE.

Delegate : Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute : Mr. C. KNOWLES.

##### BUDGET.

The audited accounts of 1935 (Document A. 3) need only passing reference.

The estimates, including certain supplementary estimates, as presented to the Assembly, are to be found in a series of Documents numbered A. 4. Further estimates were laid before the Fourth Committee in the course of the Assembly, and to these I will make reference later.

Particulars of the financial position on the 31st August are contained in Document A. 30. The position disclosed is encouraging, the percentage of payments for the current year having been greater than on the corresponding day of 1935. This document also contains brief information regarding two funds created by decision of the Sixteenth Assembly—the Reserve Fund, comprising certain arrears collected, and the Guarantee Fund, comprising part of the cash surplus of 1934, with an allocation from the Reserve Fund. The former fund meets a long-felt want. The latter flows from the action of the Fourth Committee last year in substantially reducing credits, and was provided to meet possible deficiencies.

The new League Building is not yet finished, so that the Building Fund does not this year call for special comment.

Before proceeding to consider the Budget as a whole it would be advisable to make two observations : (1) Certain chapters of the estimates of the secretariat show lump-sum deductions. This practice was adopted last year as the result of the French “ drive ” for economy. Such an arrangement meets, on the one hand, the necessity for providing money for work which it is not certain will be undertaken and, on the other, the endeavour to bring the Budget as a whole into line with the realities of the situation, and thus to reduce at the same time the contributions of Member States and the amount of a possible surplus at the end of the year ; (2) during the course of the Assembly the Swiss franc was devalued. On this point I shall have something to say later. Here I merely remark that while after devaluation the *expenditure* budget continued to be represented by the figures as printed, the *receipts* budget expressed in terms of gold underwent considerable reduction. There will therefore be a consequent saving to Member States.

Apart from the devaluation of the Swiss franc, little happened this year in the Fourth Committee meriting close examination. There was no lengthy debate on the need for economy ; years of experience are now bearing fruit ; the position in regard to arrears is more satisfactory ; improvements in administration are making their presence felt. Nor was the organization of the Secretariat the subject of lengthy discussion. Members of the Secretariat are now housed in the new building, which is a great improvement on the old Hotel National, which was their home from 1920.



The work of the Fourth Committee was lightened by the excellent manner in which documents brought before it for consideration had been prepared. The reports of the Supervisory Commission are particularly valuable; and the wisdom shown by an earlier Assembly in entrusting the finances of the League to this small body of men is shown in full measure in results. And the League has been well served by men who have been members of the Commission for a long time. In the course of years they have acquired experience which is invaluable, and their services should not lightly be dispensed with. This year the question of the composition of the Commission became acute. The method of election is provided for in paragraph 3 of Article I of the Financial Regulations. Under that article members are elected for a period of three years; they may be re-elected for a further period of three years, but at the end of the second period they are ineligible for election until a third period of at least three years has elapsed. To have invoked the rule in 1936 would have caused the retirement of two of the original members of the Commission—Messieurs Osusky and Reveillaud—at a time when they could not easily be spared. Whatever may have been the reasons for framing the election rules on such lines (and they were probably political), such reasons could not be allowed to have undue weight this year; so, after discussion, the Fourth Committee decided to recommend the Assembly to suspend the operation of paragraph 3, Article I, of the Financial Regulations, to maintain the existing members of the Commission for 1937, and to appoint a small committee to go into the question of the method of election and to bring up a report at next year's Assembly. A resolution framed on these lines was passed by the Assembly at its meeting on the 10th October (Document A. 76). The recommendation of the Fourth Committee to the Assembly involved the appointment of an additional member of the Supervisory Commission. I am bound to say, however, that the feeling of the Committee on this point was not unanimous. After some discussion the Committee ultimately proceeded to the election of an additional member, and its choice fell upon Mr. Boris Stein, of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who received 25 votes.

Before considering, however briefly, the Budget as it emerged from the Fourth Committee, I would invite your attention to Section B of the Supervisory Commission's Report of the 25th May, 1936 (Document A. 5). This section may be looked upon as a preface to the Budget. It contains valuable information not easily extracted from the estimates, and explanatory matter dealing not only with finance, but also with organization. It is of considerable interest in itself, and was of great assistance to the members of the Fourth Committee.

The Budget surplus for 1935 was exceptional, due to payments of arrears, to improvement in the payment of current contributions, and to economy in administration. The surplus has proved a boon, since it has been the means of increasing considerably both the Guarantee and the Reserve Funds, besides providing a return to Member States of more than two million gold francs. Some remarks on the disposal of the surplus will be found in Section 4 of the Fourth Committee's Report to the Assembly (Document A. 80).

The additions made to the estimates in the course of the Assembly's session are covered by the third report of the Supervisory Commission (Document A. 5 (b)). Of the additions the most interesting to New Zealand is the provision of 83,000 francs, to be expended in connection with the question of nutrition, which has been occupying the attention of the League since last year.

This is a convenient opportunity for drawing attention to the present position in regard to the proposed settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq. This question was dealt with at some length in the High Commissioner's report to the Government on last year's Assembly. The plan for the transfer of these people to Syria, which was approved at the Sixteenth Assembly, will not be carried out; but attempts are being made to find a new place of settlement, and if these attempts are successful payment by the League of the sum promised, in whole or in part, seems likely. I will do no more than draw your attention to the remarks of the Supervisory Commission printed on page 4 of Document A. 5 (b). The Commission's recommendations were approved by the Fourth Committee.

As observed above, owing to the devaluation of the Swiss franc and the Dutch florin, the final figures of the Budget for 1937 are presented in a different form this year. The expenditure is shown in *Swiss* francs, and is estimated at 29,184,128 francs. On the other hand, the income is expressed in *gold* francs, and shows that 21,284,822 francs have to be provided for by States Members of the League after allowing for that part of the surplus of 1935 which is returnable.

It should be observed that the gold franc (which was adopted by the League of Nations in the first year of its existence), 100 per cent. fine, represents 0.290 grammes, or the same value as the old Swiss franc. The new Swiss franc, however, will vary between 0.215 and 0.190 grammes. The devaluation of the Dutch florin amounted to about 20 per cent. on the 6th October. The expenses of the Court of International Justice are, of course, paid in Dutch florins. The report of the Supervisory Commission on the effects of the devaluation of the Swiss franc on the finances of the League (Document A. IV/10) will be found of interest.

The Fourth Committee's Report was presented to the Assembly at its meeting on the afternoon of the 10th October, when the resolution with which it concludes was passed.

I think it will be agreed that the financial position of the League as disclosed in the documents made available to the Seventeenth Assembly is far more satisfactory now than it has been for some years past.

#### STAFF PENSIONS FUND.

I understand that it was Sir James Allen, New Zealand's first representative on the Assembly, who initiated action which led to the establishment of the Staff Pensions Fund.

During the past few years the financial position had given rise to much anxiety. The fund had made not only a loss of capital, principally due to the sale of securities which it was thought inadvisable to hold, but there had been a loss of income due to the impossibility of obtaining an average rate of

interest ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.), which was one of the fund's principles of finance. The policy of giving security precedence over rate of yield had resulted in the greater part of the fund's assets having been placed on deposit without interest. Indeed, two-thirds of the assets were held in the form of gold. Such was the position when the Administrative Board made its report to the Assembly (Documents A. 11 and 11 (a)), with which should be read the report on the actuarial valuation of the funds. Indeed, the Consulting Actuary was of the opinion that the loss in respect of both capital and interest should be amortized by the League, and he made certain proposals to this end. His view, however, was not accepted by the Supervisory Commission, whose remarks on the position will be found on pages 3 and 4 of its report (Document A. 5 (a)).

So serious was the view held in some quarters that I understand the British delegation had under consideration a proposal to appoint a special Committee of investigation.

But suddenly the position changed. The Swiss Government decided to devalue the franc, and a deficit of more than three million francs was turned into a profit on paper of from one to one and a half million francs. Great care, however, will still need to be exercised. The Board is a capable one, and there is every reason to believe that it will give close attention to certain points which require to be modified or clarified.

The administration of the fund, which to be solvent must earn  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on its investment, offers a problem these days, and the investment policy seems to require close and expert consideration. No further comment by me is needed, but in conclusion I would refer you to the section dealing with the Pensions Fund in the Fourth Committee's report to the Assembly (Document A. 80).

#### ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES.

In an earlier report expression was given to the view that no question of an administrative nature would give the League more trouble to solve than that of the allocation of expenses. One is compelled to confess, however, that, although there was a somewhat long debate on this subject in the Fourth Committee, during which many speakers complained that their country's case had not received sufficient consideration at the hands of the special Committee on the Allocation of Expenses, the recommendations made to the Fourth Committee were accepted without any considerable opposition, and in an atmosphere in which good feeling and a spirit of conciliation predominated. Such a result speaks well for the efforts which the special Committee had made in an attempt to secure justice and fairness amongst the States. Complaints there were bound to be—comparisons were inevitable; but an improved scale has been secured. It will apply during the years 1937 to 1939. As has happened before in other fields of League operations, Great Britain came to the rescue, and the special Committee in its report speaks in appreciative terms of the British Government's offer to increase its contribution temporarily by three units.

A report on the allocation of expenses (Document A. 10) came before the Fourth Committee early in the session. However, it was felt desirable that the Allocation Committee, whose mandate had expired, should be reappointed with a view of reconsidering its recommendations, if necessary, in the light of further information, including information which would be made available by States that had not been heard. Document A. 10 has therefore to be supplemented by the report which the Fourth Committee laid before the Assembly (Document A. 82.)

As a result of further deliberations, the Fourth Committee was recommended to maintain the reductions already suggested amounting to 35 units, but to change the total of proposed increases from 39 to 27.

To enable you to compare the recommendations in May, 1936, with those made in the following October, it is suggested that you refer to the second report of the Allocation of Expenses Committee (Document A. IV/9). Briefly, the effect of the changes in the recommendations is to increase the amount in gold francs of a unit, since the total number of units is now fixed at 923, in place of the 935 contemplated in May last, and is actually less by 8 units than the present scale, which was fixed at 931.

Many States benefit under the new scale, including New Zealand, whose contribution is reduced from 10 to 8 units, which I think is fair, and certainly is more in accord with her ability to pay as judged on the statistics available. When the matter came finally before the Fourth Committee your representative expressed gratitude for the consideration given by the Allocation Committee to New Zealand's case. In doing so he said that the Dominion had felt for some years that her contribution was too high having regard to her resources, but that she had not complained and had only made representations when invited. I may add that those representations were limited to a written statement and that it was thought unnecessary that any one should appear before the Allocation Committee on behalf of New Zealand.

The Fourth Committee's report came before the Assembly on the afternoon of the 10th October, when the new scale (printed on page 3 of the report) was approved for the years 1937, 1938, and 1939.

While in the opinion of the Allocation Committee the new scale has elements of permanence, the question is by no means settled, and there is little doubt that it will have to receive further serious consideration in a few years' time.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS IN ARREAR.

It will be remembered that last year arrangements, which were subsequently endorsed by the Sixteenth Assembly, were made with certain States which were in arrears of their contributions for the ultimate liquidation of outstanding debts. The matter had been dealt with by a Committee known as a Special Committee on Contributions in Arrears, whose Report (Document A. 29) to the Seventeenth Assembly deals with (amongst other matters) negotiations carried on since 1935 with other States. With five States—Bolivia, Bulgaria, Colombia, Liberia, and Peru—settlement was reached, and the recommendations of the Special Committee as printed on pages 3 and 4 of the report were accepted by the Fourth Committee. There are, however, yet other States with which arrangements have not been made, including four countries in Central and South America who have given notice of withdrawal from the League.

I draw your attention to the section of page 2 of the report dealing with prompt payment of current contributions and to the recommendation on page 4.

On the afternoon of the 10th October the Fourth Committee presented a short report to the Assembly (Document A. 81) and a draft resolution under which the Special Committee's report, with a slight modification, is approved by the Assembly. Under the draft resolution a Special Committee on Contributions, consisting of five members, is appointed to deal with matters that may arise in connection with the collection of contributions and to report to the Assembly at its Eighteenth Session.

The resolution was adopted by the Assembly.

#### COMMITTEE No. 5: HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute: Sir CECIL DAY.

##### TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

In its campaign against narcotics the League derives its authority from Article 23 (c) of the Covenant, which states that subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions, existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the members of the League:—

“Will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children and the traffic in opium and dangerous drugs.”

The question has three main aspects:—

- (1) Opium for smoking (or prepared opium), essentially an Eastern problem;
- (2) Drugs manufactured by chemical processes from opium and coca leaves; and
- (3) The raw material supplied by countries producing the opium poppy or coca leaves.

For the assistance of Governments in the campaign against this traffic the League has three administrative organs:—

- (1) The Advisory Committee (consisting of twenty-five members and two assessors) which represents both the producing or manufacturing countries and the consuming countries. Its chief function is to help the Council of the League to exercise general supervision over the Agreements or Conventions (five in number) regarding Opium and other Dangerous Drugs and to suggest steps to be taken.
- (2) The Permanent Central Opium Board, a body of eight experts who keep a constant watch on the movements of the international drug market, with a view to recommending the Council to take action against any country violating the Conventions.
- (3) A Supervisory Body of four members (one representative of each of the two bodies mentioned above, and representatives of the Health Committee of the League and of the Office International d'Hygiene Publique in Paris) whose object it is to examine estimates of narcotic requirements supplied by Governments and to draw up statistics and publish statements regarding the traffic.

During its discussion of the subject the Committee had before it a review of the work of the Permanent Central Opium Board and the *aide-memoire* of the Rapporteur (M. Gorgé, of Switzerland). These reports show that by the addition of seven accessions to the Convention for the Limitation of the Manufacture and the Regulation of the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs sixty States are now parties to this instrument.

In its attempts to control the drug traffic throughout the world the League has been able to register notable achievement. It has undertaken the task of stamping out this plague, which is described as worse than leprosy, since it is more contagious and possibly more difficult to cure; and while care should be taken to avoid too great optimism, there is much encouragement to be drawn from the success which has attended its efforts so far. Manufacture has been limited at the sacrifice of much loss of revenue to manufacturing States. For example, India, which thirty-five years ago derived from the export of opium no less than £7,250,000, now exports but a very small quantity to the United Kingdom and a few other places for purely medical and scientific purposes. Her revenue from this source has consequently almost entirely disappeared.

But while control has been satisfactorily established over manufactured narcotic drugs, the Fifth Committee was unanimous in the view that a resolute attack must now be made upon the excess of production of raw materials—the real source of the evil. Clandestine manufacture to which drug traffickers now resort in regions of the world, such as China, where the raw materials are grown extensively and are thus easily accessible, has assumed alarming proportions, and it is clear that if there is a surplus of production of the raw material that surplus will find an outlet in the illicit market. To satisfy its legitimate requirements the world requires approximately 540 tons of raw opium. Statistics (which do not, however, include the great opium-producing country of China) show that in 1934 the ascertained production of raw opium was about 1,080 tons. China, one of the most serious victims of the illicit traffic, has undertaken the total suppression of poppy-growing and the use of opium within a fixed period of five years, but its difficulties in carrying out the plan are recognized as considerable. However, the Chinese Government has expressed its determination to achieve this desirable object. The countries chiefly concerned in producing raw opium are Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, Greece, India, Indo-China, Iran, Japan and Korea, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Yugoslavia. In these countries hundreds of thousands of peasant families are annually cultivating the opium poppy over an extensive area, and the elimination of this means of livelihood will involve considerable sacrifice.

To summarize, despite an effective control of manufacture and legitimate trade, and despite also the much stricter supervision on the part of the authorities, the *illicit* traffic in opium has not appreciably diminished and is aided considerably by clandestine manufacture in a growing number of countries in east and west.

The efforts of the League are being redoubled to establish a systematic organization of the campaign against the evil. Under the 1931 Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs, the contracting States (fifty-five in number) are bound to communicate to each other, through the Secretary-General, particulars of important cases of illicit traffic. This information is carefully studied by a Sub-Committee set up by the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium, and known as the Seizures Sub-Committee.

Long and interesting discussions by members of the Fifth Committee disclosed a refreshing determination on the part of those countries which are chiefly affected to use their utmost endeavours to abolish the traffic. The deliberations of the Committee culminated in a recommendation for adoption by the Assembly of the following resolution:—

“The Assembly—

“Noting the decision, adopted by the Advisory Committee on the Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs at its twenty-first session (18th May to 5th June, 1936), and approved by the Council on 19th September, 1936, to continue the studies and the collection of documentary material relating to the control of the cultivation of the opium poppy with a view to convening at as early a date as possible a conference for the purpose of drawing up a convention for the limitation of this raw material;

“Considering that the limitation of raw materials constitutes a decisive step in the campaign of the League of Nations against the abuse of narcotic drugs and a logical and necessary crowning of its efforts;

“Recommends that all Governments shall furnish the Advisory Committee with every possible assistance in its preparatory work, and particularly in the collection of the necessary information;

“Invites the Governments of the producing countries to communicate, before 31st January, 1937, the information requested in the questionnaire addressed to them by the Advisory Committee;

“Notes the decision of the Advisory Committee, as recorded in its report to the Council, to examine at its next session the question of the creation of a Preparatory Committee for the purpose of establishing the principles which might serve as a basis for a convention;

“Expresses the hope that the Advisory Committee will consider the possibility of holding preliminary conferences as soon as practicable—one conference to be attended by representatives of the countries producing raw opium, which export this product to drug-manufacturing countries, and by representatives of these manufacturing countries; the other to be attended by representatives of the countries producing raw opium which export this product to countries which have established a monopoly in respect of opium for smoking, together with the representatives of the monopoly countries;

“Recommends that a general conference should meet as soon as practicable after these preliminary conferences;

“Recommends that the preparatory work of the Advisory Committee and of the Secretariat shall be proceeded with as quickly as possible and should not be hampered by budgetary considerations.”

The Fifth Committee recommended the following Resolution to the Assembly in regard to illicit traffic:—

“The Assembly—

“Noting with keen satisfaction the conclusion of the Convention of 1936 for the Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in Dangerous Drugs;

“Considering that the universal application of the Convention is a necessary condition of its efficacy;

“Recommends all Governments to take as soon as possible all such steps as may be necessary for the ratification of this Convention in order that it may promptly have its full effect.”

#### TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN (AND SUPPRESSION OF OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS).

By reason of the non-existence in New Zealand of any organized system of white-slave traffic the Dominion is not directly affected by this problem. Other parts of the world are not, however, so fortunate, and in the Far East in particular this social evil is seriously prevalent.

In its discussions the Committee recorded with satisfaction that international legislation in this field is continuing unhampered by the political, social, and economic difficulties with which the world is faced. The 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children has been ratified or definitely acceded to by no less than forty-eight countries, and the 1923 International Convention for the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in Obscene Publications by forty-four countries, in addition to colonies, mandated territories, &c. To the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age, concluded at Geneva in 1933, ratification or adherence has been given by seventeen countries. In other cases (and New Zealand is one of them) delay in ratifying is due, as the Committee states not to lack of sympathy with its objects, but to the necessity for bringing existing national legislation into formal agreement with the terms of the Convention. The Committee records the hope that further ratifications and accessions will soon be effected, as the full value of a Convention of this type depends largely on its universal application.

As regards the question of the suppression of exploitation of prostitution, a draft convention has been submitted to the Governments of States Members of the League as a basis of study and with the request that their observations be sent to the Secretary-General by the 1st November, 1936. Meanwhile the Fifth Committee, in a general discussion of the problems involved, drew attention to the fact that the Traffic in Women and Children Committee had shown that the existence of the system of licensed houses or brothels was one of the chief contributing factors to this traffic, and that an immediate aim of the future Advisory Committee on Social Questions should be the abolition of these houses.

I may here add that, as a matter of convenient reorganization, the amalgamation of the Child Welfare Committee and the Traffic in Women and Children Committee into one body to be known as the Advisory Committee on Social Questions has now been effected.

The study of measures for the rehabilitation of adult prostitutes has for some time been in process, including an examination of the difficulties experienced in inducing women to give up a life of prostitution, the type of training most suitable, &c. The importance of the use of social services in connection with the treatment of venereal disease was another matter stressed by several delegates. The study is being continued, and it is hoped will go far towards enlightening the authorities and social workers on all the ramifications of the problem of rehabilitation. It would have to be extended to preventive action and the cognate problem of minors who were prostitutes or in danger of becoming prostitutes, on the ground that preventive efforts would be incomparably more effective if made in the early stages.

It has for some time past been felt that rescue work amongst women of Russian origin in the Far East who have taken to prostitution should be carried out but, so far, little progress in this direction has been possible. Last year the Secretary-General was authorized by the Assembly to endeavour to secure the services of a competent person, preferably a woman, to act as an agent of the League of Nations, under the condition, however, that the appointment should not "involve in the present circumstances any financial charge upon the League." Efforts have been made in different countries during the present year to raise the necessary funds for this work, but the sums collected so far have been insufficient to allow the appointment of such an agent. The Fifth Committee in its discussions expressed the hope that a new impulse might be given to this question by the Managing Committee of the Nansen International Office of Refugees, which in July, 1936, decided to ask the League for a mission consisting of two persons to be sent to the Far East to examine the whole problem and suggest possible reforms.

The preparation of the Conference of Central Authorities in the East on the subject of Traffic in Women and Children in the Far East, which the Committee considered to be the most important feature on the programme, has proceeded satisfactorily. The Secretary-General has been in communication with the Governments interested in the Conference with regard to the participation of international organizations and missions, and of national, regional, or local organizations, it being understood that the participation would be of an advisory or consultative character. With one exception, all the Governments which have already replied have approved in principle the participation in the conference of voluntary organizations and also of the list submitted by the Secretary-General of such international bodies. Of the twelve Governments originally approached nine have decided to take part in the Conference. Eight of these—viz., the United Kingdom (Governments of Hong Kong and Malaya), China, France, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Siam—would be represented by full delegates, and one, the United States of America, by an observer. Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan had stated that they were unable to take part.

This Conference will open in February, 1937, and on the invitation of the Netherlands Government will take place at Bandoeng, Java.

In a desire to demonstrate its special interest in the work of this important Conference the Fifth Committee submitted to the Assembly for approval the following resolution :—

"The Assembly—

"Having taken cognizance of the present position regarding the Conference of Central Authorities in the East to be convoked in conformity with previous decisions of the Council and the Assembly of the League of Nations ;

"Noting that the Conference will be held in February, 1937, and that, on the invitation of the Netherlands Government, which the Assembly records with appreciation, it will take place at Bandoeng, Java ;

"Noting further that the following Governments have agreed to participate in the Conference : the United Kingdom (Governments of Hong Kong and Malaya), China, France, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Siam, and the United States of America (the last named being represented by an observer) ;

"Considering the importance to be attached to the following questions, forming the agenda of the Conference : Closer collaboration between the central authorities in the East ; migration so far as it affects traffic in women and children ; closer collaboration between the authorities and private organizations ; the employment of women officials by authorities responsible for the welfare of women and children in the East ; the abolition of licensed or tolerated brothels in the East ; and the position of women refugees of Russian origin in that part of the world who have become, or are in danger of becoming, prostitutes ;

"Approves the proposed agenda, which it considers practical and in conformity with the matters raised in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East ;

"Expresses the hope that the important task of the Conference will be brought to a successful issue, and that practical measures for combating traffic in women and children may result from its discussions ;

"And sends to the Conference a message of greeting and of good wishes for a successful conclusion to its work."

## CHILD-WELFARE.

The Members of the Fifth Committee took a very keen interest in the discussions of this complex problem, in which fundamental social and economic questions are constantly involved (*e.g.*, family allowances), education (*e.g.*, the cinema), public morals (*e.g.*, the status of the illegitimate child). They realized the necessity of proceeding with caution and of preparing people's minds for a discussion of the various questions before formulating suggestions. The studies of the Child Welfare Committee have been designed to encourage the various countries to examine the spirit and methods that obtain there in the treatment of child-welfare questions and to introduce amendments, whenever necessary, in their laws and administration. It was important, the Committee considered, that normal children should be the main subject of the inquiry and that the constructive side of child-welfare should be insisted upon quite as much as the more limited, although vital, question of protecting children against harmful influences or shameful exploitation.

As I have already indicated, the Child Welfare Committee and the Traffic in Women and Children Committee are now merged into one organization, to be known as the Advisory Committee on Social Questions. It was agreed that this latter Committee in the sphere of activity of the suppression of traffic in women and children and that of child-welfare should be—

- (1) A centre of international documentation, in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences, methods, and results between the Governments and voluntary organizations ;
- (2) A centre of study which would conduct, direct, or simply provoke international or national inquiries on social questions ;
- (3) A centre of action, to organize co-operation between Governments, prepare conventions, agreements, international conferences, &c., and establish co-operation between private organizations dealing with international social questions.

The Fifth Committee in its conclusions after an extensive exchange of views stated that, while recognizing the utility of encouraging the work of the voluntary organizations, follows with interest the development of social consciousness and of the feeling of social responsibility. In social work old methods are being replaced by new ; the development of social action on a scientific basis is conferring a greater importance to the professional character of certain forms of social work. But the Fifth Committee greatly appreciates the activities of the voluntary organizations which are devotedly pursuing their activities in social service. These organizations serve, in the most fortunate manner, as a complement to the official social service, and undertake experiments outside the sphere of activity of that service. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that preventive action is a factor which is everywhere added to the conception of social work carried out on scientific lines.

Last year the Committee drew the attention of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions to the importance of considering, in the first place, the normal child, and it suggested certain directions in which its work might be developed in order to attain this object :—

- (1) A comparative study of the organization and conduct of child-welfare work, with reference to the competence both of the authorities and of voluntary organizations ;
- (2) The extension of child-welfare work to populations living in other than large urban communities.

The Fifth Committee noted that the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, owing to its reorganization, had not dealt with the substance of this question. It expressed the opinion that the protection of normal children will have to engage the particular attention of the Advisory Committee on these questions. Taking into account the salient points of the discussion, the Fifth Committee noted certain well-defined tendencies which reflect the considerations now chiefly prevailing among Governments—namely, that social conditions are closely related to economic factors and peace in the political sphere. At the same time it noted the special attention which several Governments pay to child-welfare in rural districts.

The Fifth Committee further noted with satisfaction that the problem of housing, which is of essential importance to the moral, social, and physical development of children and young people, had engaged the attention of numerous Governments, and in view of these facts it considered that the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, in making a choice among the new questions to be studied, should direct its attention to those problems which have aroused such general interest.

In view of the great interest displayed by Governments, as reflected in the discussions on the subject, it was of the opinion that the extension of child-welfare work among the population living in other than large urban communities might be one useful point of departure in guiding the Advisory Committee's activities towards the problems connected with normal children. The aim of such a study would be to find out whether children living in other than large urban communities are at a disadvantage so far as child-welfare measures are concerned. It should also endeavour to ascertain how far in small and large communities the work of voluntary organizations makes good the shortcomings of the provisions of legislation or local regulations.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the multiplicity, complexity, and interdependence of the problems relating to child-welfare have led several Governments to a constantly increasing co-ordination of research, supervision, and technical direction. Some fifteen countries have centralized their child-welfare under a " Council," and some have even set up a " Ministry of Child Welfare."

A thorough study of the experience gained by certain countries, when brought to the knowledge of all, might facilitate further results.

The Fifth Committee therefore suggested that one of the first subjects to be considered by the Advisory Committee should be " the study of the general organization of child-welfare," a study to comprise a comparative examination of the results obtained in this sphere for the purpose of presenting the different solutions susceptible of being found for the problem of the organization of child-welfare.

It was further considered that, with a view to better co-operation between the Advisory Committee and other organizations dealing with different aspects of social questions, it would be necessary to establish liaison with other commissions and committees when questions likely to concern the Advisory Committee were being discussed.

The important part played by small communities in the placing of children in families was emphasized. The documentation obtained in this aspect showed that the methods and practice of administering the laws and regulations in small communities presented special problems, and to these problems the Advisory Committee on Social Problems was constantly applying its energies. This Committee has also decided to undertake in 1937 the important task of a general study of the principles underlying the treatment of the neglected and delinquent child. This study will also include Child Welfare Councils and the boarding-out of children in families, so far as they are connected with the treatment of the neglected and delinquent child.

The same body (the Advisory Committee) also takes an interest in the problem of nutrition, a problem having a great bearing on public health and the economic, agricultural, and social developments of all nations. While the subject of nutrition is the main concern of the Second Committee (which deals, *inter alia*, with technical and economic problems), the Council of the League had agreed to a suggestion that the Advisory Committee on Social Questions, which would be particularly interested in the problem of the distribution of foodstuffs, according to both quantity and quality, amongst the whole population as far as mothers and children are affected, should have a representative on the Mixed Committee on Nutrition.

As regards the tendency observed in measures taken by certain Governments and authorities to give preference to the organization of canteens, it seemed to the Fifth Committee a matter for consideration whether these measures, which tend to diminish the family's responsibility without giving it the benefit of education, are as good as measures taken to carry the new principles of nutrition into the home. Useful work might be done in studying the relative value of canteens, milk kitchens, &c., in promoting improved family standards of nutrition, as compared with the results obtained by individualized education of families in their own homes. In the methods of educating the general public in order to bring the newer knowledge of nutrition within their reach, the Fifth Committee emphasized the importance of maternal efficiency in the health and well-being of the family, and advocated the education of all girls in the principles of nutrition and care of children, since this knowledge on the part of the general public and mothers is of such eminent importance for the development and welfare of children and young people.

Realizing the progress which New Zealand had already achieved in its efforts to promote child-welfare, I took the opportunity, on the 2nd October, of addressing my fellow-delegates on the Fifth Committee.

In giving a brief survey of the aims and activities of the Child Welfare Branch of the New Zealand Education Department, I referred to the policies of past and present Governments directed towards the attainment of further progress in the treatment of the problem, and emphasized the importance which New Zealand attached to dealing with it from the pre-natal period. Other aspects touched upon in my remarks were the system and the activities of the Plunket Nurses under which the needs of both European and Maori mothers and children were given the most efficient attention, State medical examination and dental care, the distribution of cocoa and milk in the schools at Government expense, the care of children in rural as well as urban districts (a point which was stressed by several delegates), and housing. As having an important bearing upon the problem at its root, I mentioned the recent introduction of the basic wage at a sum considered sufficient for the needs of a father, mother, and three children; referred to the compulsory payment of family allowances, State allowances to widows and deserted women, and the children whom they had to support; to the boarding-out system for children under proper State supervision, and to the prohibition of child labour, even on farms. In conclusion, I stated that the Government were prepared to give sympathetic consideration to any practical suggestions which the Advisory Committee might in future put forward.

A resolution from the Fifth Committee was drafted for presentation to the Fourth (or Budget) Committee asking that the credit vote for the work of the new Advisory Committee be increased by 15,000 francs. This grant was reduced to 12,000 francs by the Fourth Committee.

In conclusion, the Fifth Committee submitted to the Assembly the following three resolutions:—

“The Assembly—

I. “Thanks the Advisory Commission on the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People for the efforts it has made to improve the lot of children and young people;

“Suggests that, in view to better co-operation between the Advisory Committee on Social Questions and other organizations dealing with different aspects of social questions, liaison should be established with other Commissions and Committees when questions likely to concern the Advisory Committee are being discussed.”

II. “Attaches particular importance to the decision of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions to draw up at its next session a ‘scheme of study’—that is to say, a programme of work;

“And is of opinion that one of the first points in its work should be a study of the more important solutions that have been found for the problem of the general organization of child-welfare in various countries.”

III. “Approves the interest displayed and the efforts made by the Advisory Committee on Social Questions in regard to the social aspect of the problem of nutrition and,

“Considering that the study of the welfare of children living in urban communities and in rural districts is in many respects connected with the problem of nutrition:

“Is of opinion that the Advisory Committee should deal in greater detail with the social aspects of this question in co-operation with the Mixed Committee on the Problem of Nutrition, particularly from the point of view of child-welfare;

“Recommends the Advisory Committee to consider the utility of pursuing the study of these two questions, which supplement one another.”



## ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENT FOREIGNERS.

The question of assistance to indigent foreigners was first brought up in the Child Welfare Committee in the limited form of assistance to indigent foreign minors. After a careful study of the question over several years the Committee came to the conclusion that such assistance could not satisfactorily be dealt with without taking into account the position of the families to which the minors belonged. In a subject bristling as this is with difficulties, progress has been slow. A Committee of Experts, comprising representatives of twelve countries, including the United Kingdom, France, the United States of America, Japan, and Italy, and assisted by two private international organizations, prepared in 1933 a draft convention stipulating in general that each of the contracting parties should grant indigent nationals of the other contracting parties residing in its territory, and needing material or moral assistance, the same treatment as it grants its own nationals. With this draft Convention the Committee also submitted recommendations to Governments in 1934, the underlying principle of which was that States should aim at placing foreigners, as far as possible, on the same footing as nationals in the sphere of assistance to indigent persons, and should safeguard the unity of the family, which should serve as a basis in applying measures of assistance.

While the majority of the Governments favoured in principle the drawing-up of a multilateral convention on the lines recommended by the Committee, a large number of amendments to the draft were suggested. After studying these suggestions, as well as the cognate subject of maintenance obligations abroad, the Committee, by decision of the Council in May, 1936, framed and despatched to Governments for consideration a second draft multilateral Convention which represents a compromise among the various tendencies disclosed by the communications of the different Governments. So far, only five of the States have replied.

The Fifth Committee considered that at the present time it would be premature to think of summoning a diplomatic conference to conclude a multilateral convention for assistance to indigent foreigners, and after discussion decided to submit to the Assembly the following resolution :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Noting the work of the Committee of Experts on assistance to indigent foreigners and the execution of maintenance obligations abroad, at its second session in January, 1936 :

“ Thanks the Committee for its efforts to improve the position of indigent foreigners by framing a second draft multilateral Convention on the basis of the observations of Governments ;

“ Asks the Governments to send the Secretary-General, in conformity with his Circular Letter 118, 1936, IV, dated 13th July, 1936, their observations on this second draft Convention by 1st January, 1937 ;

“ Requests the Council to take cognizance of these observations, and in the light thereof to decide whether or not it will be desirable to convene the Committee of Experts to study and report on the observations communicated by Governments and to take any other or further action which may seem appropriate.”

## PENAL AND PENITENTIARY QUESTIONS.

It will be remembered that, in order to ensure an improvement in the penitentiary system, the Assembly requested Governments in 1934 to communicate to the League of Nations, if possible annually, and if necessary with the collaboration of qualified associations, the experience obtained and any other observations relating either to the application of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners which was drawn up by the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission and recommended to Governments by the 1934 Assembly, or the reforms in general brought about in penitentiary matters.

The Fifth Committee had before it the replies of Governments, including that of New Zealand, in response to the request, together with reports from a number of special organizations such as (to mention only two) the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission and the Howard League for Penal Reform. These replies and reports are reproduced in Document A. 25, 1936.

Perhaps the most important statement made during the discussion of this question in committee was that of the French delegate to the effect that the French Government had decided to abolish convict settlements, and that a Bill to this effect would be submitted to its Parliament during the present year.

The United Kingdom delegate (Miss Graves) in explaining that her Government was continuing its practice of reporting to the International Prisons Commission upon developments in prison administration, gave examples of types of recent legislation in Great Britain which had tended to reduce the number of persons committed to prison.

Particular attention was drawn to the importance of proposals aiming at reducing the number of prisoners by the introduction of measures such as the suspension of penalties, conditional release, the right to pay fines in instalments, the reduction of the maximum terms of imprisonment, &c.

It was thought that recourse might be had to the good offices of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission with a view to inquiry into the number of prisoners over eighteen years of age existing in the different countries at the nearest possible date to 31st December, 1936, and the hope was expressed that Governments would be able to supply information to that Commission by the 31st March, 1937, so that it could submit a report to the Secretary-General of the League before 1st July next.



In conclusion, the Fifth Committee proposed to the Assembly the adoption of its report, which is contained in Document A. 70, 1936, V, and of the following resolution :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Having taken note of the Secretary-General's report on penal and penitentiary questions (Document A. 25, 1936, IV) :

“ Thanks the Governments for the reports that they have sent to the League this year (see Document A. 25, 1936, IV), and requests them to continue to inform the League annually of any reforms that have been effected in their penal and prison systems ;

“ Thanks the international technical organizations for their annual information on their work, and for their valuable co-operation in promoting the study of penal and penitentiary questions on international lines ;

“ Instructs the Secretary-General to have recourse to the good offices of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission asking it to institute, if necessary with the assistance of the League Secretariat, an inquiry—

“ (a) Into the number of prisoners over eighteen years of age (separate figures being given for men and women) in the different countries at the nearest possible date to 31st December, 1936. By prisoners is meant persons deprived of their liberty (excluding those detained on account of mental or physical unfitness), whether—

“ (1) On remand, or awaiting trial ;

“ (2) Under judicial sentence ; or

“ (3) Detained and not included in the above categories.

Where possible the figures should show the numbers of prisoners of each of these three categories.

“ (b) Into the measures taken in different countries during recent years with the object of reducing the number of prisoners.”

#### INTERNATIONAL RELIEF UNION.

This body is constituted by an international Convention which came into force in 1932. There are now thirty contracting States, including New Zealand. Its object is to render first aid to populations which have suffered from some natural calamity (*e.g.*, flood or earthquake) of such gravity that it cannot be dealt with solely by the resources of the country afflicted. In such cases the Union affords the machinery and resources for co-ordinating whatever international assistance may be forthcoming. Every contracting State contributes to the formation of an initial fund at the rate of 700 Swiss francs (about £35) for each unit of its annual contribution to the League (in the case of New Zealand formerly 10 units, now reduced to 8). Some States are slightly in arrear with their contributions. The Union is also authorized to receive private and voluntary contributions. A General Council and an Executive Committee are the administrative organs.

The efforts of the Executive Committee of the Union during the past year were devoted to the improvement of its methods of co-ordination for the administration of relief and the encouragement of research and preventive methods, where possible, against disasters, and in endeavouring to secure the co-operation of certain private organizations working on similar lines. The placing on a sound basis of the Working Capital Fund, whose revenues should be in proportion to its normal expenses, and the constitution of a reserve of cash in hand sufficient to allow of the sending of relief to afflicted countries upon the first news of a disaster being received, are other matters constantly engaging the attention of the Union.

It may be of interest to record that when in June of last year India (a member of the Union) had one of its regions, Baluchistan, ravaged by an earthquake which claimed more than five thousand victims, and caused material damage estimated at £2,200,000, the Union promptly informed the contracting States of this calamity by telegram, and as a result was able to collect £2,522 from seven Governments, of which sum Italy and New Zealand each contributed £1,000. Although these gifts seem modest compared with the number of victims and the extent of the damage, they represent the first case of mutual assistance speedily rendered, in response to an appeal made by the International Relief Union, to contracting States for the relief of another State Member stricken by a natural disaster.

After a brief discussion of the subject the Fifth Committee proposed that the Assembly adopt the following resolution, which is contained in Report A. 71, 1936, XII :—

“ The Assembly—

“ Having taken note of the report on the activities of the Executive Committee of the International Relief Union from 1st January to 31st December, 1935 :

“ Expresses its gratification at the useful work done by that organization with a view to improving its means of action ;

“ Emphasizes the value of the agreements concluded or contemplated with private organizations as a method of increasing the efficacy of those means ;

“ Expresses the hope that the Executive Committee of the Union may, thanks to the authority that the Union has acquired, continue to exert its beneficent influence in the various fields of international relief work ;

“ And trusts that Governments will consider the possibility of intensifying the action of the International Relief Union by securing the appropriate co-operation.”

## SIXTH COMMITTEE: POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

Delegate: Mr. W. J. JORDAN. Substitute: Mr. C. A. BERENDSEN.

## REFUGEES.

The Sixth Committee had referred to it for consideration under this head:—

- (1) The report of the Nansen International Office for Refugees.
- (2) Results of the work of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees—
  - (i) Report of the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees;
  - (ii) Report by the Acting-President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office for Refugees; and
  - (iii) Report of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Jewish and other Refugees coming from Germany.

This subject, in view of its importance and its difficulty, was referred by the Sixth Committee to a Sub-Committee on Refugees, of which Lord Cranborne, of the United Kingdom, was made Rapporteur. The Report of this Sub-Committee, a lengthy document (A. VI/6, 1936) itself gave rise to considerable debate in the Sixth Committee, but was, in general, approved.

The Nansen International Office for Refugees, which in accordance with a resolution of a previous Assembly is to be liquidated by 1938, should in the opinion of the Committee continue its activities at least until that date and without prejudice to any future decision that might be taken by the Assembly for its further extension.

Much sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate of the refugee class in many countries, and two specific proposals were made in this connection:—

- (1) That a credit of 15,000 francs be asked for to enable the Nansen Office to send a mission to the Far East with the task of studying the situation of refugees in that part of the world, a proposal which was declined by the Fourth Committee (Finance); and
- (2) That a credit of 400,000 francs should be established with a view to settling refugees from the Saar in Paraguay.

This latter proposal led to an animated debate in view of the principle that previously had been accepted, that the actual work of caring for individual refugees was not properly a League activity, and a further objection was raised by the representative of Bolivia, who made a general reservation on behalf of his Government in respect of any League activity that might prejudice the existing position in the Chaco. On the other hand, it was stressed that the League had a particular responsibility for the refugees from the Saar in view of the League's administration of that Territory, and that the situation was comparable to that of the Assyrian refugees from Iraq, in connection with which the League had voted a considerable sum.

The Sixth Committee finally resolved to recommend a credit of 400,000 francs. The Fourth (Finance) Committee, however, declined to agree, but compromised on adding 200,000 francs to the Budget of the Nansen International Office.

So far as Jewish and other refugees from Germany are concerned, the Committee considered that the existing arrangements to care for this unfortunate class of people should be continued, and that in 1938 the question of refugees as a whole should be considered by the Assembly.

The report of the Committee on this subject is Document A. 73, 1936, XII, and the Committee's concluding resolutions are of sufficient importance to warrant their quotation in full, as follow:—

## I. "The Assembly—

"Having examined, in the light of verbal explanations, the reports of the Acting President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office and of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany;

"Having taken into account the recommendations of the Committee for International Assistance to Refugees:

"Thanks the Committee for their valuable report, and Judge Hansson and Sir Neill Malcolm for the work which they have done during their term of office."

## II. "The Assembly—

"Having weighed the many elements in the refugee problem;

"Having noted that, in pursuance of previous decisions of the Assembly and in conformity with the recommendations of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany, the organizations created by the League of Nations on behalf of refugees will terminate at the end of 1938;

"Having taken account at the same time of the continuing difficulties of this problem and of the importance of ensuring as soon as possible a uniform regime of legal protection for the refugees:

"Recommends the Governments concerned to adopt the Convention of 28th October, 1933, relating to the international status of refugees, and the Provisional Arrangement of 4th July, 1936, concerning the status of refugees coming from Germany;

"Recommends also that Governments concerned should participate in the negotiation of a Convention for the protection of the refugees from Germany;

"Considers, further, that the Assembly should, at the latest at its ordinary session in 1938, determine the general principles which, after that year, should govern the attitude of the League towards the refugee problem as a whole."

### III. "The Assembly—

"Is happy to note that Governments have in certain cases been able to extend to refugees in their territories more liberal treatment than is provided for in the relevant international agreements, and having heard, with appreciation, the declaration made by the French delegation regarding recent measures adopted by the French Government in respect of refugees (legal status, joint committees, labour permits);

"Expresses the hope that all Governments will adopt as liberal an attitude as possible towards refugees in their territories;

"Notes, on the other hand, that serious difficulties have been created by the practice adopted in certain countries of withdrawing protection from their nationals abroad; and

"Expresses the earnest hope that this practice may be discontinued."

### IV. "The Assembly makes the following proposals in respect of the Nansen International Office and the High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany—

"Nansen International Office—

"The Assembly—

"Has taken note of the previous decision of the Assembly that the Nansen Office should be liquidated within a specified time and according to fixed budgetary rules, and, in execution of this decision,—

"(1) Proposes that a President of the governing body of the Nansen Office should be appointed by the present Assembly until 31st December, 1938, with the following duties—

"(a) To carry on the administration of the Office, in accordance with the existing statute, until it has been liquidated, and to organize the activities of the Office during the period of liquidation, with the help of the technical services of the League of Nations;

"(b) To draw up at an early date and, if possible, to submit to the Council at its next May session a detailed scheme for the liquidation of the Nansen Office; in any event, the report should be in the hands of Governments before 31st July, 1937, in order that the scheme may be considered at the next ordinary session of the Assembly;

"(c) To make recommendations in time for consideration by the Assembly at its ordinary session in 1938 on the best method of allocating the tasks undertaken by the Office up to the date of its liquidation in the light of the situation existing at that time;

"(2) Notes the recommendations of the Acting-President in regard to the settlement of different categories of refugees, especially those relating to the transfer of Armenian refugees to Erivan and to the position of the Armenian refugees settled in Syria.

"Approves, while accepting the reservations made by the Fourth Committee, an additional grant of 200,000 Swiss francs to the Nansen International Office for the purpose of facilitating the transfer and settlement in South America of Saar refugees residing in France.

"(3) Recommends that the following proposals of the Acting-President should be brought to the notice of Governments for careful consideration—

"(a) The encouragement, so far as circumstances permit, of the naturalization and absorption of refugees in countries in which they have been resident for many years;

"(b) The issue of surcharged postage-stamps to assist the Nansen Office in its work;

"(c) The general application of the principles of the Franco-Belgian Agreement of 30th June, 1928;

"Refugees coming from Germany (Jewish and other)—

"The Assembly recommends that a High Commissioner should be appointed until 31st December, 1938, for the purpose of liquidating, so far as possible, the problem of refugees coming from Germany, and that the High Commissioner's duties should include, in particular, the following—

"(1) As regards the improvement of the legal status of refugees, to approach Governments in order to obtain their accession to the Provisional Arrangement of 4th July, 1936, and to prepare an inter-governmental Conference for the adoption of an international convention on the status of these refugees;

"(2) As regards questions of emigration and final settlement, to encourage initiative on the part of private organizations; to support such initiative by negotiations with the Governments of the countries of refuge; and, if necessary, to have definite plans for colonization and emigration studied on the spot, in agreement with the Government concerned;

"(3) To maintain contact with the various private organizations, in particular through the Liaison Committee of an international character which has already been set up;

"(4) To submit an interim report to the Assembly at its next ordinary session and, at its session of 1938, to present a report on the situation of the refugees at that moment and on the progress made towards the final solution of the problem, and definite proposals in regard to the future.

“ The Assembly—

“ Recommends that a suitable appropriation to cover the administrative expenses of the High Commissioner should be provided by the competent organs of the League ; and

“ Notes that the sum required for this purpose for the year 1937 amounts to 82,500 Swiss francs.”

V. “ The Assembly—

“ Having taken note of the report of the governing body of the Nansen International Office for the year ending 29th June, 1936 :

“ Expresses appreciation at the satisfactory results of the general application of the Nansen stamp system in France, and hopes that a similar practice will be adopted in all countries ;

“ Again urges Governments not to expel refugees until they have obtained entrance visas for another country ;

“ Requests the Governments of the immigration countries to continue to co-operate with the Office by informing it of the possibilities of settlement in their territories ; and

“ Recommends Governments to consider the advantage of capitalizing their expenditure on refugees and of placing such funds at the disposal of the Office for the settlement of refugees.”

VI. “ The Assembly—

“ In order to give effect to the provisions of the present resolution—

“ (1) In accordance with Article 6 of the Statute of the Nansen International Office for Refugees, appoints Judge Hansson as President of the governing body of the Office until 31st December, 1938, and grants him a credit of 5,000 Swiss francs for representation allowance for the year 1937 ;

“ (2) Requests the Council to appoint, in the course of its present session, a High Commissioner for the Refugees coming from Germany (Jewish and other), until 31st December, 1938.”

#### INTELLECTUAL CO-OPERATION.

The Sixth Committee's discussion of this subject ranged over a wide and varied field, and its report is sufficient to indicate the multiplicity of subjects to which attention was directed. Among these subjects may be mentioned the following :—

Free circulation of educational films.

Teaching of history.

The use of broadcasting in the cause of peace (a Convention on which had been signed shortly after the opening of the Assembly session).

A draft convention for the protection of national artistic and historic treasures.

A universal charter for authors' rights.

Expansion of the permanent international studies conference.

Co-operation among the educational authorities in League of Nations' teaching.

Unemployment among intellectual workers.

Revision of school text-books.

International conversations on arts and letters.

The study of the problems of foreign policy, education, literature, and art.

International art exhibitions.

The collection of ethnographical and historical works.

Safeguarding of the artistic and cultural riches of Spain.

Exhibition of art and technique in modern life.

Exact and natural sciences.

Finally, an interesting discussion ensued as to whether it would not be possible for the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation to take more definite and practical steps to develop international co-operation by means of mutual understanding between nations. This object, which is no doubt the basis of all the activities of the movement for international intellectual co-operation, met with considerable support, but it was finally decided to leave the question of concrete steps for consideration by the next Assembly.

The Committee's report on Intellectual Co-operation is Document A. 66, 1936, XII, and the resolutions which it proposed to the Assembly are as follows :—

##### 1. General resolution—

“ The Assembly is glad to note that the activities of the Intellectual Co-operation Organization have been maintained and extended during the year 1935-36, despite circumstances which have often been very difficult, and that the programme carried out during the year, as well as that planned for 1936-37, is inspired by the constant desire to achieve work useful to the League of Nations, the States which belong to it, and intellectual workers themselves.

“ It approves the various reports which have been submitted to it, and particularly that of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation (Document C. 328, M. 205, 1936, XII) on the work of its Eighteenth Session, and that of the governing body of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (Document C. 318, M. 199, 1936, XII), and thanks the Committee and the governing body for their systematic and persistent efforts.

"The Assembly associates itself with the thanks offered by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation and the Council of the League of Nations to the Argentine, Hungarian, and Spanish institutions for the generous assistance afforded by them to the work of intellectual co-operation on the occasion of the Buenos Aires and Budapest 'Conversations' and of the Ninth Permanent International Studies Conference held at Madrid.

"In general, the Assembly warmly thanks the States which pay contributions to the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, thus giving a token of interest and confidence in its work, and affording the Institute moral encouragement and indispensable material assistance."

## 2. Permanent Committee on Arts and Letters—

"The Assembly, noting the development of the 'Conversations' organized by the Permanent Committee on Arts and Letters, or under its auspices, and the interest evinced in these 'Conversations' by a growing number of Governments, approves in its turn the proposal adopted by the Council on 25th September, 1936, to increase the number of members of that Committee from fourteen to eighteen, and inserts a supplementary credit of 5,050 Swiss francs for this purpose in the budget for the next financial period."

## 3. Exact and Natural Sciences—

"The Assembly approves the programme of work prepared by the Committee of Scientific Experts, which met at Geneva on 9th and 10th July, 1936, hopes that it will be promptly carried into effect, decides to set up for this purpose the Permanent Scientific Committee requested by the experts, and, accordingly, decides that a supplementary credit of 10,000 Swiss francs be entered in the budget for the next financial year."

## 4. Education—

"The Assembly, having noted the recommendation adopted on 9th July, 1936, by the Advisory Committee on League of Nations Teaching with regard to the proposal of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, recommended by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, with a view, in particular, to the establishment of regular co-operation between the competent sections of the Secretariat on the one hand and the wireless broadcasting companies and adult education associations on the other, expresses the hope that the proposal will be carried into effect as soon and as widely as possible."

## 5. Declaration on the Teaching of History—

"The Assembly hopes that the numerous States who have already approved the principles of the Declaration on the Teaching of History, adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations at its Sixteenth Session, and since communicated to Governments by the Council of the League of Nations, will sign that document."

## 6. Unemployment among Intellectual Workers—

"The Assembly, having taken cognizance of the plan prepared by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation to combat unemployment among intellectual workers

"Considers that the Committee's action in this sphere, conducted as arranged with the co-operation of the International Labour Office, may be of the greatest value to States ;

"Approves the measures proposed and requests the Governments to facilitate their application to the best of their ability."

## 7. Broadcasting and Peace—

"The Assembly expresses its satisfaction at the recent conclusion, under the auspices of the League of Nations, of an International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace :

"It is happy to note that this agreement was signed immediately on its conclusion by twenty States ;

"And hopes that the number of acceding Governments will increase as rapidly as possible, thus ensuring the maximum effectiveness to the Convention."

## 8. Fine Arts—

"The Assembly—

"Asks the Secretary-General to transmit to the Governments the recommendations of the International Museums Office regarding International Art Exhibitions ;

"Expresses the hope, in this connection, that the competent national administrations will be guided in practice by the principles laid down in these recommendations."

## 9. Ethnographical and Historical Collection on the Origins of American Civilization—

"The Assembly—

"Approving the resolution adopted by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation at its Eighteenth Session, regarding the plan for an ethnographical and historical collection on the origins of American civilization ;

"Having also taken cognizance of the revised plan submitted by Ambassador Levillier, which it approves subject to its acceptance by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation ;

“ Having further been informed that the Governments of Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela have offered to afford material support to the plan, that the Argentine Government offers to contribute a sum of 25,000 Argentine pesos per annum for the establishment of the collection, according to a plan and conditions of execution approved by it, and that the Faculty of Philosophy of Buenos Aires University has agreed to take charge of the Spanish edition :

“ Warmly thanks them for these generous contributions, and asks the Intellectual Co-operation Organization and its Executive Committee to examine, as soon as possible, the plan of the conditions in which it is to be executed. A special session of the Executive Committee, assisted by experts, should be held for this purpose, the costs to be defrayed out of the credits at the disposal of the Secretariat of the Intellectual Co-operation Organization for the current financial period.

“ The works are to be published in French and Spanish, under the supervision of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in the case of the French edition, and of the Faculty of Philosophy of Buenos Aires University in the case of the Spanish edition.

“ The costs of the Collection, which will serve as an intellectual link between America and the Old World, should be covered by the contributions already promised and by other contributions of Governments or institutions.

“ The Assembly urgently appeals to the Governments and institutions concerned to place the necessary funds at the disposal of the International Institute on Intellectual Co-operation.”

#### 10. Intellectual Rights—

“ The Assembly—

“ Notes that the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law have fully carried out the task entrusted to them by the Sixteenth Assembly as regards the bringing into line of the Berne and Havana Conventions on Authors' Rights ;

“ Hopes that the texts prepared, in co-operation with Senator Antuna, President of the Inter-American Commission on Authors' Rights, will be approved both in Europe and America, and that the next revision of the Berne Convention will provide an occasion for the conclusion of a universal convention on Authors' Rights.”

#### 11. Intellectual Co-operation Month at the 1937 Universal Exhibition—

“ The Assembly, having been informed of the decisions taken by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation concerning the organization of various manifestations of intellectual co-operation in July, 1937, at Paris, in connection with the Universal Exhibition of Art and Technique in Modern Life ;

“ Warmly thanks the French Government and the General Commissioner of the Exhibition for their generous assistance ;

“ Expresses the opinion that the proposed meetings are likely not only to make intellectual co-operation more widely known, but to give important results ;

“ And, willingly acceding to the Council's wish, recommends these manifestations to the favourable attention of Governments, particularly the second General Conference of National Committees on Intellectual Co-operation, which should be attended by as large as possible a number of the representatives of these Committees.”

#### 12. International Educational Cinematograph Institute—

“ The Assembly approves the resolution of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation concerning the International Educational Cinematographic Institute's work. It once more emphasizes the importance of the rôle assigned to that Institute by the Convention on the international circulation of films of an educational character, and expresses the hope that Governments would make full use of this Convention in encouraging exchanges of educational films likely to contribute to mutual comprehension between peoples.”

#### 13. The League of Nations and Modern Means of spreading Information utilized in the Cause of Peace—

“ The Assembly—

“ Emphasizing once more the desirability of developing international co-operation and mutual understanding between nations ;

“ Having regard to the rapid contemporary development of the technical means of disseminating information ;

“ And considering that this development increases the possibilities of furthering the mutual exchange between nations of information relating to their respective institutions and cultures—

“ (1) Is of opinion that this question might well be the subject of discussion at the next ordinary session of the Assembly ;

“ (2) To this end invites the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation to draw up, after such consultations as they may deem appropriate, detailed suggestions to form the basis of the Assembly's discussions ;

“ (3) And further invites the Secretary-General to report on the above-mentioned technical means of spreading information at the disposal of the competent sections of the Secretariat in order that the Assembly may consider at its next ordinary session whether such means are adequate or whether their further development is desirable in this direction.”

## MANDATES.

As in previous years, the Assembly, on the proposal of the Norwegian delegation, referred the documentation concerning Mandates to the Sixth Committee which proceeded to review the activities of the Mandatory Powers and the work of the Council and of the Permanent Mandates Commission. Reference was made to the importance of maintaining the principle of economic equality in the territories under A and B Mandates, and to the importance of the question of the education of Native people, but the greater part of the Committee's discussions on this subject was devoted, firstly, to the recent Franco-Syrian agreement leading towards the autonomous Government of Syria and the Lebanon, and more particularly to the then current disorders in Palestine. In this connection the representative of the United Kingdom repeated the statement which that Government had already made to the Council—that circumstances as yet did not permit the British Government to supply adequate material for the examination of the disturbances, their cause and the lessons to be drawn therefrom until the proposed Royal Commission should have concluded its work. A suggestion that a special session of the Permanent Mandates Commission should be called for the purpose of investigating the position in Palestine was characterized as premature by the British delegation and was not pressed.

The representative of South Africa took the opportunity of referring to the danger of the militarization of Native populations which was contrary to its own policy in reference to the Mandated Territory of South-west Africa. He referred also to the constitutional problem of South-west Africa and to the suggestion that the mandated territory might be incorporated as an additional Province of the Union which had been the subject of a recent study at present under consideration by his Government. He renewed his undertaking that the League would be informed before any action was taken.

No reference was made to Western Samoa and no statement made by the New Zealand delegate. The report of the Committee on this subject is Document A. 69, 1936, VI, and the draft resolution is as follows:—

“ The Assembly—

“ Having noted the activity of the mandatory Powers, the Permanent Mandates Commission, and the Council concerning the application of the principles laid down in Article 22 of the Covenant and in the texts of the mandates—

“ (a) Renews to them the expression of confidence voted by previous sessions of the Assembly, and pays a tribute to the results they have achieved, thanks to a close and frank co-operation which it is essential to maintain ;

“ (b) Expresses its profound regret at the disturbances which have been going on in Palestine since April, 1936, hopes that order will be promptly restored, and has full confidence in the impartiality of the inquiry instituted by the mandatory Power ;

“ (c) Expresses its appreciation of the efforts of the mandatory Power with a view to bringing forth the emancipation of Syria and Lebanon, has full confidence in its action to that effect, and hopes that the questions connected with the problem of emancipation will be equitably settled.”

## SPECIAL WORK OF THE NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COUNCIL.

On page 5 of this report reference has been made to the election of New Zealand to fill one of the non-permanent seats on the Council of the League.

It is, of course, the duty of every representative on the Council to familiarize himself with, and to take part in, the whole of the activities of the Council and the many and varied problems which come before it from time to time. But, in addition, each member has a special subject assigned to him to which he must give a detailed study and upon which he acts as Rapporteur, submitting recommendations and answering questions when that subject is under examination or discussion.

To New Zealand has been allotted the interesting and important subject of health.

The Health Organization derives its charter from Article XXIII (f) of the Covenant, which provides that States Members of the League will endeavour to take steps in matters of international concern for the prevention and control of disease. Its purpose is to promote the protection of public health by international co-operation. As an official international organization it does not concern itself with the internal affairs of the various countries, unless they expressly ask it to do so. Its chief mission, therefore, consists of giving its support to the national Governments and services responsible for the protection of health, and in promoting their collaboration. Its resources are such as national Governments and institutions place at its disposal.

The organization comprises—

(a) An Advisory Council consisting of representatives of fifty-two Governments. This Council prepares international conventions and proposes their adoption to Governments and supervises the application of the International Sanitary Convention of 1926.

(b) The Health Committee, which directs the health work of the League of Nations.

(c) A Secretariat constituted by the Health Section of the League Secretariat.

A summary of the chief problems falling within the sphere of the Health Organization's studies is given (on page 13) in the section of this report which contains an account of the proceedings of the Second Committee. I need only add that its efforts are devoted to the diverse and practical health problems of present-day importance, and that in essence its action, as admirably expressed in a recent publication “is exercised primarily in favour of healthy living, which is both a cause and an effect of social reform.”

As an indication of the activities of the Assembly while in session and of the Committees forming parts of its organizations it may be of interest to record that the number of meetings held on this occasion and attended, of course, by the New Zealand delegation was as follows :—

Plenary meetings of the Assembly	..	..	..	..	..	17
Main Committees (First to Sixth)	..	..	..	..	..	56
General Commission	..	..	..	..	..	2
Broadcasting Conference	..	..	..	..	..	9

This list refers only to meetings which were open to the public. It excludes those held in private—for example, meetings of the Credentials and Agenda Committees, the Council of the League, and a number of informal gatherings the majority of which called for the presence of one or other of the New Zealand delegates.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. J. JORDAN,

High Commissioner.

The Honourable the Prime Minister, Wellington, New Zealand.

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